

Township of Esquimalt Public Works Department COVID-19 Safety Plan

January 12, 2022

Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township of Esquimalt (The Township) has followed recommendations issued by the Public Health Officer and WorkSafeBC in order to ensure the safety of our staff and residents, while ensuring that all essential services have continued. Some of these steps have included:

- Re-Implementation of the COVID-19 Safety Plan, in place of the Communicable Disease Plan
- Closure of facilities to the public as of January 12, 2021 except by appointment;
- Increased cleaning and sanitizing in the workplace;
- Implementation of processes to allow staff to maintain physical distancing;
- Requiring that masks be worn in all common areas; and when meeting with other staff;
- Requiring all staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19;
- Requiring that all staff perform a daily health check before entering their workplace, and
- Requiring an Attestation of Vaccination from contractors who will come into contact with Township staff.

During this next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township will continue to take direction from the Provincial and Regional Health Officers who, under Provincial legislation, are delegated the responsibility and authority to protect public health.

On May 25, 2021 the Province announced a 4-step reopening plan, with steps to move us back to our pre-pandemic life by early September 2021, provided case counts and hospitalizations continued to decline, and more than 70% of our population was vaccinated. The Province is currently in Step 3 of the four stage plan and has not yet moved to the fourth and final step. The Province will not proceed to the next step until it is safe to do so based on guidance from the Public Health Officer and the latest available data.

The Township is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for its employees, clients, and residents and this document outlines the steps the organization has or will be taking in order to suppress the transmission rate of COVID-19 in the Public Works department. This Safety Plan can be found on our website at <https://www.esquimalt.ca/community-events/news/covid-19-information> and staff can access through the Occupational Health and Safety page on the Township's intranet. A copy of the Safety Plan can also be found posted in various locations throughout the Public Works Yard building.

Step 1: Assess Risks in the Workplace

The new variant, Omicron, spreads via aerosol and it has been documented that this variant is much more contagious than other variants of the COVID-19 virus.

The Public Works department conducted a risk assessment to determine the level of risk to employees in conducting their job tasks. The risk assessment looks at all elements of the work including:

- Proximity to others;
- Ability to control and limit access to the building for non-Public Works staff;
- Ability for workers to maintain physical distancing;
- Exposure to higher-risk job tasks / environments such as the sanitary sewer and storm drain construction/maintenance, and refuse collection;
- Masks are required to be worn by all staff in all common areas and when meeting with other staff, unless a medical exemption has been granted by the emergency operations centre (EOC);
- Identifying common areas where people gather and outlining the maximum number of people who can be in a common area at the same time. This will be updated as the Provincial Health Officer's requirement to physically distance is eliminated.
- Identifying and maintaining cleanliness of high touch locations such as tools, doorknobs, light switches, and common areas;
- Ability to limit in-person meetings; and
- Identifying necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).

Most of the staff working in the Public Works department have a low risk of infection due to the fact that the building spaces in the public works yard allow for physical distancing, public and employees from other departments have restricted access to the building, and the majority of Public Works staff work outside.

Work tasks that have been identified as having a higher level of risk are:

- Refuse collection
- Construction and maintenance on the sanitary sewer and storm drain systems.

Step 2: Implement Protocols to Reduce the Risk

Employer Responsibilities:

- Ensure that all employees perform a daily health check before entering the workplace.
- Ensure that masks are worn in common areas and when meeting with others, and that contractors, vendors and the public wear masks when entering our facilities.
- Review employee work space to ensure there is 2 metres between (in instances where there are no physical barriers), and that staff can effectively physically distance themselves, including when in vehicles.
- Ensure cleaning protocols are in place for employees using vehicles.

- Provide staff with access to hand sanitizer.
- Provide staff with access to PPE as required or requested.
- Provide staff with access to hand sanitizer
- Place posters in washrooms and over sinks outlining effective hand washing techniques.
- Place posters with occupancy limits in common areas.

Area Occupant Limits

Front Office Foyer	Max 3
Chargehand Room	Max 1
Lunchroom	Max 10
Washroom	Max 2
Change Room	Max 8
Mobile Office	Max 5

- Provide disinfectant spray in most common rooms such that users can spray down after use.
- Processes have been created to deal with possible COVID-19 exposure in the workplace (outlined below).
- Provide timely training and communication to staff regarding rules and guidelines pertaining to COVID-19.
- Post signage indicating that employees, contractors, or visitors exhibiting COVID-like symptoms are not allowed to enter the facility.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Learn and follow all applicable policies and procedures.
- Complete daily health checks before entering the workplace.
- Masks are to be worn in all common areas and when meeting with others, unless a medical exemption has been granted by the EOC.
- Avoid physical contact between individuals, including hand shaking.
- Practice good hygiene, including frequent hand washing and avoid touching your face.
- Keep work environment clean using appropriate products to clean and disinfect items including desk, work surfaces, phone, keyboard.
- Maintain physical distancing.
- If employee has any COVID-19 symptoms including a cough, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, or fatigue, they must:
 - Stay home
 - Call 8-1-1 and follow their direction
 - Not return to the workplace until after 5 days has lapsed since they first developed symptoms, and they no longer have any symptoms.
- If an employee comes to work with these symptoms they will be sent home unless they have confirmation from a doctor that the symptoms are not contagious (e.g., hay fever).

- If employees have the risk of more severe illness (over the age of 60 or compromised immune systems) they must speak with their Manager who will, with the assistance of medical professionals, determine risk and extra precautions that need to be met.
- Report any unsafe conditions or acts to their Supervisor.

Step 3: Policies and Processes

Public Works specific Policies are located in the Appendices of this document.

Township Policies regarding Attendance:

The Township has developed and implemented a Working from Home Policy during COVID-19 in order to limit the number of people working in our facilities.

The Township also implemented a COVID Policy. The purpose of this policy is to clarify expectations regarding attending work, absences from work, and reporting requirements related to the COVID-19.

As of January 10, 2022, all employees must be fully vaccinated in order to work for the Township, as reflected in the Township's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

Township process for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infections:

The Township has reviewed Provincial Health regulations and orders , and staff need to self-isolate if they develop symptoms for a minimum of five days, or until symptoms subside.

Processes Regarding Public Access:

Deliveries:

- Signage is posted on the exterior of each facility such that suppliers and/or delivery persons understand the safety protocols including dropping off goods at building entrances.

Visitors Attending Pre-booked Appointments:

- Visitors will be required to complete a health screening declaration, and masks are required to be worn by all;
- When booking appointments, visitors should be reminded to reschedule if they experience symptoms typical of COVID-19; and,
- Visitors will be limited to specific areas of the facilities to ensure that developed cleaning protocols are followed for pre- and post-meeting areas.

Step 4: Develop Communications Plan and Training

Employer Responsibilities:

- Ensure all staff receive training and have access to policies and plans on:
 - The risk of exposure to COVID-19, and the signs and symptoms of the disease;
 - The risk controls, protocols, and checklists referred to in this plan;
 - How to obtain and use cleaning supplies including cleaning sprays and hand sanitizer;
 - Proper use of PPE; and,
 - How to report an exposure to, or symptoms of, COVID-19.
- Ensure Public Works' Occupational Health and Safety Committee is involved in the review of Safety Plans, with recommendations from the Committee forwarded to management for review.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Attend training and follow policies and procedures; and,
- Report unsafe work conditions to your supervisor, and then to the applicable Occupational Health and Safety Committee; and
- Provide feedback on plans, policies, and procedures to your supervisor.

Step 5: Monitor and Update Plans as Necessary

Employer Responsibilities:

- Review policies and plans periodically with staff;
- Update plans as necessary; and

- Ensure Public Works' Occupational Health and Safety Committee is involved in the review.

Employees Responsibilities:

- Report unsafe work conditions to your supervisor; and
- Provide feedback on plans, policies and procedures to your supervisor.

Step 6: Assess and Address Risks from Resuming Operation

The Township has continued operations throughout the pandemic and have reviewed and adhered to the recommended steps necessary to resume operations. All staff will receive training on updated plans, procedures, and protocols.

RESOURCES

- BC Centre for Disease Control: www.bccdc.ca
- Provincial Health Services Authority: www.phsa.ca
- Health Canada: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html
- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- BC Construction Safety Alliance: www.bccsa.ca
- Health Canada: [Public health management of cases and contacts associated with novel coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- WorkSafeBC: www.worksafebc.com

APPENDIX A: COVID-19 SAFE WORK PROCEDURES – PUBLIC WORKS

Contents:

1. Policy – Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning
2. Policy – Personal Protective Equipment for COVID-19
3. Policy – Physical Distancing and Cleaning at the Public Works Yard



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

SAFE WORK STANDARD:

Township of Esquimalt Public Works Staff Physical Distancing and Cleaning at Public Works Yard Policy– COVID-19

General Information:

This Policy outlines safe work practices for reducing risk of transmitting COVID-19 between employees while accessing and using equipment, vehicles and Public Works building.

Working in Proximity to Coworkers:

Crew must wear respiratory protection when working within 2-metres of coworkers or the general public. Respiratory protection is defined below. All individuals riding in standard single-cab vehicles together must wear a mask. Non-standard vehicles must be assessed to determine whether they meet safe work requirements for physical distancing.

Access to Public Works Building:

In order to maintain adequate physical distancing the following general guidelines have been developed:

1. All staff and visitors are required to wear a mask in common workplace areas (hallways, lunchroom, mobile office, washrooms, Stores and front office administration).
2. All staff and visitors are required to complete a self-check prior to entering the building, and must sign a daily health declaration.
3. Crew meetings should be conducted outside while maintaining 2 metre distance.
4. Crews should avoid the office area at the front of the Public Works building, if at all possible.
5. All requests for supplies from Stores should be made by phone or email. Supplies will be placed on the table outside of Stores for pickup.
6. All requests for Mechanic services should be made by phone or email.
7. Crew should attempt to limit the number of individuals in the following indoor work areas:
 - a. Maintenance Shop
 - b. Welding Shop
 - c. Tool crib
 - d. Callout Shed
 - e. Paint Shop

Cleaning Shared Equipment and Spaces:

Bottles of Sodium Hypochlorite and/or PerCept solution (see below) are provided for Public Works staff to use for cleaning vehicles, equipment and any shared work and break spaces. All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before disinfection.

All equipment, fleet vehicles must be cleaned before and after use, as per signage and *Vehicle Cleaning Policy*. Photos of signage in place can be found at the end of this document.

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Individuals will be responsible for frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces including tables in the lunch room and shared work areas. Tables and chair armrests in lunch room should be cleaned after each use.

Cleaning solutions:

As recommended by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 virus can be effectively deactivated with common cleaning products and disinfectants.

At time of writing, Vancouver Island Health Authority has listed a 500 ppm strength bleach solution as an effective for cleaning and sanitizing any common areas if a staff member has become sick. **Sodium hypochlorite** 12% is diluted to 500 ppm (mg/L) and used for sanitizing surfaces. It is recommended the solution be mixed fresh daily and bottles are labelled with the date and time they were mixed.

Percept is a concentrated general virucide disinfectant cleaner, diluted 1:16 and used for sanitizing surfaces. The solution is stable for up to 4-weeks when diluted with tap water. Bottles are labelled with solution expiry date.

DEFINITIONS:

Equipment:

Items that are used to conduct Public Works activities, including but not limited to: saws, tamper, personal gas monitors, sewer camera, small hand tools, etc. These items will be shared between crews.

Vehicles:

All numbered vehicles in the Township of Esquimalt fleet, including Tandem and single axel dump truck, heavy equipment, crane truck, bucket truck, etc. Many of the fleet vehicles will be shared between crews.

Respiratory Protection:

Respiratory protection provides at minimum a barrier to prevent spreading of droplets. Due to the shortage of N-95 masks for non-medical use, respiratory protection should be chosen in the order listed below, based on availability:

- Fabric masks
- Non-surgical disposable masks
- Fit-tested personal respirator
- N-95 mask

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Daily Contractor/Visitor Health Declaration

Please do not enter the workspace if you:

Are displaying any of the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of sense of smell and/or taste
- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- Extreme fatigue/tiredness
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Please print your name and sign below to indicate that you have done a health check and you are not displaying any of the symptoms outlined above, and that you are feeling well.

Date: _____

Name	Signature	Company	Contact Phone #

If you are displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, refer to HealthLink BC at 811.

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Signage on exterior doors to Public Works building:



Signage in Fleet vehicle:



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