



FIRE RESCUE



**Esquimalt Fire Department re-Opening Plan for COVID-19**

<b>Phase:</b>	<b>Step 2</b>
<b>Implementation:</b>	<b>November 26, 2020</b>

**Background:**

The Province of B.C. has announced their BC COVID-19 Go-Forward Management Strategy outlining plans and requirements for workplaces to re-open to employees and the public in a four step process. While the Township didn't close entirely, services have been reduced during this time and plans are required to re-introduce some services to the public, and to ensure the continued safety of staff.

The following plan outlines the steps taken by the Esquimalt Fire Department to ensure the safety of staff while providing limited services to the public.

**Public Safety Building**

**Public Access:**

Staff will continue to encourage the public to use online services and other means of communication (phone, emails and video meetings) to obtain or exchange information.

The public safety building can be accessed by the public by scheduling an appointment or meeting with a staff member when appropriate. Scheduled appointments will be required to complete a questionnaire before coming in and be trained in our disinfecting and entry procedures. The appointments or meetings should be conducted in spaces large enough to maintain social distancing of 6ft at all times. Administrative support staff will be working in the station for 3 days a week and remotely for the remaining days. While working remotely, administrative support staff will continue with daily check-ins.

Couriers will continue the current practice of dropping off materials in the lobby area and notifying the department administration by phone. Signs indicating this procedure will be refreshed and posted in the lobby area along with notifying police reception staff.

**Outsider Accessing Building**

Fire station areas under the control of the fire department will remain access restricted unless a scheduled appointment has been established with anyone from outside of the fire department. Anyone entering the fire hall for a meeting will adhere to department established disinfecting guideline set out and appended to this plan. They will also be required to reply negatively to a COVID questionnaire before entering which has been posted at all entry points to the building.

All contractors entering the Fire station are to perform a daily health check before entering their workplace and recorded on forms provided.

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**Area Occupant Limits**

First Aid Room (apparatus bay area)	Max 2
Assistant Chief's Offices	Max 3
Chief's Office	Max 4
Admin Assistant area	Max 2
Galley table area	Max 6
Kitchen Prep area	Max 2
Front office washrooms	Max 1 each
Back washroom/ shower area	Max 3
Back washroom locker area	Max 2
Upstairs training/Lounge room	Max 8
Basement training room	Max 10
Basement Gym	Max 3
Dorms	Max 1

Apparatus Bay limits will be based on maintaining proper 2 metre distancing

**Entry Procedures:**



All persons will decontaminate their personal items (e.g. bags), footwear and hands prior to entering the station. Our current cleaning locations will remain in place on the apparatus floor and front stairwell. In addition, posted signage will direct anyone who is not feeling well to not enter the building.

All employees entering the Fire station are to perform a daily health check before entering their workplace and recorded on forms provided.

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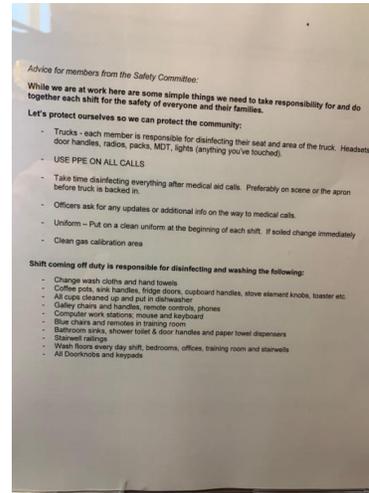


### **Station Cleaning Routines:**

At the end of every shift (day and night) department members will continue to clean the fire station prior to the start of the next shift (see attached checklist) and document all actions. In addition, high touch equipment such as sitting areas, computer stations and apparatus locations, will be cleaned by the user. Members may also perform additional cleaning if desired prior to the use of any workspace area.

Members will continue to wash hands frequently during the daily activities and use alcohol based hand cleaners that are located around the station and on apparatus.

Members are encouraged to following hygiene and cleaning principles as set out in the Esquimalt Fire Department March 31, 2020 COVID -19 response Guidelines



### **Physical Distancing during station activities:**

Members will maintain physical distancing while in the public safety building. This includes space during training, meal breaks and physical workouts.

At shift changes, members will continue to prepare for their departure in advance of the end of their shift to reduce face to face time with opposite shift members.

### **Emergency / Non-Emergency services**

#### **Emergency and Non-Emergency calls:**

The department will continue to provide all fire and rescue services within the Township. During these responses physical distancing will be maintained unless using full PPE while on medical aid calls.

Under the current health order and EOC directive, the Department will only respond to critical (Echo/Purple) and (Card 19/Overdose) emergency medical assist calls.

During the response to all types of calls, contact with citizens should be achieved with the minimum number of members required to perform a function, while maintaining social distance (see influenza operational guideline). Additional PPE kits (face shield, tyvek suit and gloves) have been issued to each member. Each member will use this PPE when required and dispose of or de-contaminate it after a call. Additional PPE is located in the lower medical supply cupboard. Each member will be responsible to maintain their kit.

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### **Prevention Activities**

#### **Public Education:**

The delivery of all public education programs remain suspended until a further phase of re-opening. The department will explore alternative public education activities in this phase. Activities may include the use of pictures, videos and online web materials to promote fire and life safety education.

#### **Fire Inspections:**

As part of the provincial plan to re-open commercial businesses the department will re-instate the fire and life safety inspections. Inspections will commence on most occupancies i.e. public accessible areas such as commercial malls, retail spaces, apartments, industrial complexes, etc. except for senior care homes, and will follow the OG pertaining to conducting inspection during pandemic (attached).

No home based inspections, senior care facility or pro-active home safety inspections will occur until a further phase.

When conducting inspections the members will follow the Operational Guideline during Pandemics. For businesses or facilities like schools and/or daycares, attempts will be made to inspect through pre-arrangements when they can reduce the number of persons in the complexes i.e. around closing, after business hours, etc.

The number of members conducting public inspections on any given property or business will be reduced to two members. Prior arrangements with the owner or their representative are to be made before entering the business or complex.

Inspections are mandated by Provincial regulations and Municipal Bylaw which requires our department to conduct annual fire and life safety inspections. Every effort will be made when scheduling inspections to work with the owner to minimize our impact on their operation when conducting inspections. These inspections are required to be completed and every effort should be made to accommodate the owner and may require us to do them after business hours, on weekends, end of or start of business day as examples.

This will allow them time to prepare for the additional personnel entering their space. We will maintain physical distancing and use (non-medical aid) nitrile gloves to prevent contact with any high touch surface area and wear non-surgical masks and safety glasses while in the business or complex. In addition, building representatives will not be required to sign the inspection forms, noting per COVID on the signature box. A copy of the inspection report will be provided and remain on scene for the property representative or can be emailed to them.

Once clear of the business "Decon" items where appropriate and before entering the next business or getting back on the truck. Recommend changing gloves before entering the next business. Department members will continue to follow up with outstanding inspection items as per our existing processes.

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### **Staffing Plan**

#### **Staffing levels:**

There are no changes to staffing for suppression and administrative staff during this phase of the plan. Crews will maintain a minimum strength of five or greater as per current practice.

The administrative assistant that is currently working 4 days a week from home (WFH) will begin working 3 days a week from home in this phase. The specific days of the week will be determined based on operational objectives and reviewed weekly with management.

Employees required to work from home will follow Township procedure and policies related to this activity (attached)

#### **Physical and Mental Health:**

Members are encouraged to actively monitor their physical and mental health during the pandemic and return to the new normal process. Members who are experiencing mental health challenges should reach out to friends, colleagues and seek additional assistance if required. In addition, the Department and Township has circulated other links that may be of assistance in these challenging times. If a member is struggling mentally they are expected to seek out professional medical assistance and follow their recommendation for treatment, and to keep the employer informed if this requires them to not report to work.

If a member starts to display COVID or FLU like symptoms they should remain away from work. In addition, when they call in to report their absence they have a duty to report their condition. A chief officer will follow up on additional steps such as COVID testing if appropriate.

#### **Sick/illness**

Provincial directives have been and still promote that if an employee is experiencing illness or showing signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain home for 10 days from first onset of the symptoms.

However, for fire department personnel calling in sick with COVID -19 like symptoms, Fire management want's the employee to arrange for testing and remain home until the result are obtained and or the symptoms have cleared.

Options to getting tested are:

1. Call Iridia Health for First Responders 1-844-901-8442
2. Call Health Link BC @ 811
3. Contact Victoria Health @ 250-388-2200
4. Contact VIHA @ 1-844-901-8442
5. Call your personal Physician
6. Any other option not listed above available to the member

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If an employee has an illness other than COVID related symptoms he should remain at home until illness passes and is required to provide to the employer sufficient illness detail that ensures the employee is not showing signs or symptoms associated with COVID.

The fire department suggests following the flow chart (attached) provide by Dr. Vu to best determine an appropriate course of action an employee should take when concerned over potential COVID exposure is raised. We have also attached a flow chart provided through the Township EOC group.

Employees with signs or symptoms of COVID and call in sick will not be required to obtain a Doctor's notes at this stage. If the nature of the illness or injury is not COVID related and the length of time before the employee can return to work is beyond normal workplace expectations, the employer retains the right to request a Dr.'s note upon request. Modified duties remain available as per the existing OG, be based on medical limitation and what opportunities and work priorities are available at the time.

### **Reporting illness**

If an employee starts to show signs of COVID symptoms, or any other type of illness they will be sent home and maybe required to get tested based on the illness details as established under the Sick/Illness section of this plan.

While the Provincial Health Officer and BC CDC have the following guideline:

- Self-solation for 10 day if an individual presents signs and symptoms of COVID
- Self-isolation for 14 days if an individual has travelled outside of Canada

The department will follow the principles established under the Sick/Illness section of this plan. If an employee is confirmed positive for COVID or under the direction of a provincial health officer, the employee will follow the advice of a medical health officer related to treatment and or self-isolation practices, and will inform the employer of such.

If an employee becomes ill while at work, the employer will help to determine the severity of the illness and if required arrange for advanced treatment and transportation to an approved medical care facility. Otherwise if the determination does not require that level of care/transportation the employee would be released from work and arrange his own transportation home.

The employer has established procedures to maintain a health and safe work environment found in the Esquimalt Fire Department March 31, 2020 COVID-19 Response Guideline and as modified by this plan.

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### **Attendance Management**

The department will follow Township directives related to this matter, such as:

1. Effective immediately, the Township has suspended its Exemplary Attendance Policy as it contradicts Provincial health Orders that people who are feeling unwell must stay home.
2. The township is also reviewing its Attendance Management policy which refers to employees sick leave usage and will be making amendments to the policy to include expectations of staff during COVID-19.

### **Information Sharing Of This Plan**

The employer will ensure that all employees are instructed on the content of the plan. Employers are responsible for the health and safety of their workers, and all other workers at their workplace. They are responsible for completing and posting the COVID-19 Safety Plan and to train and educate everyone at the workplace of the contents of that plan. Employers are also responsible for having a system in place to identify the hazards of COVID-19, control the risk, and monitor the effectiveness of the controls.

Workers are responsible for taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of other people at workplace. In the context of COVID-19, this means workers are responsible for their own personal self-care, which includes frequent hand washing and staying home when sick. Workers are also responsible for reporting unsafe conditions to their employer, and following the procedures put in place by the employer to control the risks associated with COVID-19.

It will be the responsibility of any member bringing in someone other than FD members into the station, to inform them on the health and safety measure in place before entering, while engaging with members and upon leaving the building

The plan will be made available to the public and FD membership at the front admin counter, posted on the bulletin board in the galley and online at P:\FIRE RESCUE\DEPARTMENT\Department\2500-2999 Personnel\2510-03 Employee health and wellness COVID-10 folder

Original hazard risk assessments and health and safety measures to address those risks are in the Fire Department COVID-19 Response Guidelines document. Employee responsibilities are also identified in this document.

Subsequent phases will be at the direction of the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafe BC requirements and will be developed once those guidelines are determined and enacted.

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We will continue to monitor your workplace and update our safety plans as needed:

•Things may change as our Department operates. If you identify a new area of concern, or if it seems like something isn't working. We will take steps to update our policies and procedures and will make every attempt to involve workers in this process.

•We will continue to ensure that workers can raise safety concerns. This may be through a worker health and safety representative or a joint health and safety committee.

During this pandemic, forwarding safety concerns should continue to follow normal department health and safety committee approaches to addressing issues. Members are encouraged to bring forward their concerns to a committee safety representative or a direct supervisor if urgent. Updates will come from management when required and the department will attempt to maintain the highest level of personnel and workplace health and safety within the guidelines establish by the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafe BC. It is the responsibility of all members of the fire department to monitor each other and our workplace environment for potential risk and to report them to management.

**Plan Attachments:**

- Attachment #1 [Fire station inspection and cleaning checklist.](#)
- Attachment #2 [Esquimalt Fire Department COVID-19 Response Guidelines \(Dated March 31, 2020\)](#)
- Attachment #3 Flow Chart Dr. Vu
- Attachment #4 [Flow Chart Township EOC](#)
- Attachment #5 [Fire Inspection OG during Pandemic](#)
- Attachment #6 [Working from Home](#)
- Attachment #7 [Occupant loads for specific areas](#)
- Attachment #8 [COVID-19 Questionnaire](#)
- Attachment #9 [Entry Protocol – Temperature Taking](#) ( Nov 1, 2020)
- Attachment #10 [Wearing Masks](#) (email from AC Widdifield Nov 23, 2020)

Field Code Changed

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