

**COVID – 19 Safety Plan**

**Introduction:**

North Island Employment Foundation Society has created a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/checklist/covid-19-safety-plan?lang=en) that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This plan follows the guidelines, recommendations and protocols administered by the BC Government, Provincial Health Officer, BC Centre for Disease Control, World Health Organization and WorkSafe BC on returning to safe operation.

Our COVID-19 Safety Plan identifies protocols that everyone at the workplace must follow to keep staff and clients safe. These protocols are to be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks in our workplace. At any time we may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to staff and clients. This will be monitored and actioned through daily conversations with staff as well as when recommendations are made by Public Health during daily Public Health briefings.

**Understanding the risk:**

Information provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control shares that, the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk.

* The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
* The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices such as handwashing and staying home when ill will help mitigate this risk.

**Selecting of Protocols - Workplace:**

Note that different protocols offer different protection. Wherever possible, use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and add additional protocols as required. The Protocol used will be determined for each type, and area of, interaction in our workplace as outlined in this document

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**\*First level protection (elimination)**: Use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time, and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public.

**\*Second level protection (engineering controls)**: If you can’t always maintain physical distancing, install [barriers](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-designing-effective-barriers?lang=en) such as plexiglass to separate people.

**\*Third level protection (administrative controls)**: Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols, telling workers to not share tools, or implementing one-way doors or walkways.

**\*Fourth level protection (PPE)**: If the first three levels of protection aren’t enough to control the risk, consider the use of [non-medical masks](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-selecting-using-masks?lang=en). Be aware of the limitation of non-medical masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. Ensure workers are [using masks appropriately](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-how-to-use-mask?lang=en).

\*Provided by [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)

**Office Protocols:**

**Building Access –**

* We have arranged a staggered start and end time for staff shifts in order to avoid crowding at entry and exit locations. All staff will enter and exit through the rear parking lot entrance.
* We have scheduled all client appointments in a staggered manner in order to avoid crowding at entry and exit locations. All clients will enter and exit through the front door
* At this time, the door providing main entry into the building will remain locked to avoid Clients entering and exiting the building at free will.
* We have made hand sanitizing stations available to staff as they enter the building.
* We have made hand sanitizer and single-use non-medical masks available to all clients, contractors and visitors as they enter the building.
* [Signage](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-visitors?lang=en) has been posted indicating that staff, contractors, or visitors exhibiting COVID-like symptoms are not allowed to enter the office building. \*This has been updated as the November 2020 WorkSafe protocols.
* Occupancy limits have been established and posted that will limit the amount of staff, clients, contractors and visitors in the building at any given time. This will be monitored by our electronic scheduling system to monitor appointments and schedules. At this time building occupancy is 35 (a combination of Staff, Clients and Visitors).
* Staff can be given the opportunity to work remotely from home in order to limit the amount of staff in the building.

Staff will not be permitted to work in the building if they are sick. Staff have 15 paid sick days per year that can be used for paid time off when ill. We also provide short and long term disability benefits for those with longer periods of illness

**Workplace Operations –**

* At this time, our office remains closed to the public as we will provide virtual services to our clients and employers.
* Where possible, we have remote work options for staff.
* Staff work schedules have been staggered to reduce the amount of staff in the building at any given time. Staff can have the ability to work from either the office or remotely in order to serve clients.
* We have implemented measures to keep staff at least 2 metres apart, wherever possible. Measures included but are not limited to; revising work schedules and reorganizing work tasks, one way walking paths throughout the office, posting occupancy limits in gathering spaces. When social distancing measures cannot be met, staff and clients are guided to wear non-medical masks to help reduce the risk of transmission.
* Large staff meetings and gatherings have been cancelled in order to maintain physical distancing.
* Where small team in-person team meetings have been scheduled; a larger meeting room/space has been provided in order to allow for safe physical distancing. Once the identified room occupancy maximum are meet; others will be able to attend virtually.
* At this time, there are virtual or small group (1-3) workshops available to our clients.
* We have posted occupancy limits for common areas within the building such as the lunch room, meeting rooms, file room, mail room and elevators.
* There is the potential of creating cohorts of staff who work together and who do not interact with other cohorts. This will assist in reducing transmission throughout the workplace in the event that a staff member becomes ill.
* We have established one-way foot traffic patterns on staircases to minimize contact – posted signage to indicate direction.
* We have implemented a one-way foot traffic flow pattern that will allow staff and visitors to travel throughout the building and will minimize contact with other individuals. Visitors will be accompanied by staff when they are in the building.
* Cleaning protocols have been implemented in all areas of the office including high contact areas as well as staff workstations these protocols include the availability of hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and sanitizing spray to be used on surfaces.
* Cleaning protocols for all common areas and common surfaces include; washrooms, shared tables, desks, light switches, door handles. These areas are cleaned after each use while the office is in operation as well 5 nights a week through a contracted maintenance service.
* This workplace has adequate handwashing facilities on site for all of our staff. Handwashing stations are visible and easily accessed.
* We have installed barriers/partitions at the Front Reception Desk to allow for safe physical distancing in those areas. These barriers will be installed so they don’t introduce risks to staff and visitors.

\*As per the November 19 Public Health Order; Masks are now required for everyone in all public indoor settings and workplaces.  Masks are required in all workplaces for shared work areas and areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Refer to the information provided in the PHO's [order](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions) for more details around where this order applies. People who cannot wear a mask or who cannot put on or remove a mask on their own are exempt.

**Workstations –**

* When staff are working in the office, they are positioned in a location that allows them to put more distance between themselves and their co-workers or clients. Workstations at least 2 metres apart and away from communal pathways.
* Pathways throughout the office are one directional to reduce personal interactions.
* Some workstations will have an effective [barrier](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-designing-effective-barriers?lang=en) (e.g., plexiglass barrier) that will allow for separation between the staff member and client.
* Where possible, in-person meetings have been cancelled. Alternatively, meetings will be conducted by teleconference, video conference, or email instead.
* When Staff are working alone in their individual office/workstation a Mask does not need to be worn. Once you leave your individual office/workstation you will need to wear a mask. When you have other staff members in your office/workspace everyone will need to wear a mask.
* When meeting with Clients for in-person service appointments/agreement signings, etc. Masks will need to be worn by staff and client.

**Hygiene Protocols –**

* In accordance with Public Health and WorkSafe BC we have Implemented hand hygiene practices and avoiding face touching with unwashed hands can prevent infection transmission. This is particularly effective before and after breaks or meeting clients, even in the absence of physical contact.
* As non-surgical as well as disposable non-medical masks will be provided at this workplace, we have posted [signage about the correct use of masks](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-how-to-use-mask?lang=en) and removal of masks.
* Our staff ensure good respiratory etiquette by covering the mouth and nose with the crease of the elbow or with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing. We encourage clients to do the same.
* We ensure used tissues, disinfectant wipes, and safety equipment are properly disposed of in a lined waste receptacle that is emptied at least daily. Our waste receptacles do not require physical contact (e.g., removal of lid) to discard items.
* Our Employment Counsellors will ensure that they are sanitizing all high touch services (e.g., door handles, light switches, and signature pads) before and after a client attends an in-person appointment.

**Communal Spaces –**

* Changes made to the usage of communal areas have been clearly communicated to staff.
* Single-person access if entry into constricted area is required this includes: the elevator, staff file room and staff mail room.
* Limited staff access allowed in common areas at any one time. This will included but not be limited to staggered break times to reduce large gatherings and encouraging staff to take breaks at their own desk or outside. Encourage staff to eat outside or at their desk.
* Distancing the tables in lunch rooms has taken place.
* If breaching the physical distancing requirement is unavoidable, plan the work task and provide instructions to staff to ensure that time spent in close proximity is minimized. During this time, staff will wear non-medical masks.
* Restrict eating to a clearly identified and dedicated area with handwashing stations, cleaning and disinfectant supplies, and adequate space to maintain the physical distancing requirement.
* Staff have been provided the option to bring their own dishes and utensils.
* Refrain from providing and consuming communal foods.
* Communal doors are to remain open where possible throughout the workday to reduce contact with door handles.
* Minimize the number of staff using previously shared office equipment or other items (photocopiers, fax machine, coffee machines, kettles and microwave ovens, etc.). Shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
* We have established[hygiene practices](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-handwashing?lang=en) that address the needs of the workplace that includes the requirement to wash or sanitize hands after coming into contact with public items.

**Outside Visitors –**

* Visits to the workplace will be prearranged, staggered, and safety protocols will be communicated before entry into the workplace (e.g., email and/or signage posted at entrance).
* Signage has been posted at this workplace to inform every one of the measures in place.
* When booking appointments, visitors will be reminded to reschedule if they experience symptoms typical of COVID-19 or are placed on self-isolation.
* Minimize non-essential in-person interaction between workers and visitors (e.g., use of virtual meeting tools, email, or telephone).
* Waiting areas have been arranged to maintain physical distancing requirement. Installed [barriers](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-designing-effective-barriers?lang=en) between receptionists and visitors (e.g., plexiglass). Markings have been placed on the floor directing visitors where to stand when approaching front desk.
* Provide visitor-facing staff with hand sanitizer for their use only.
* Visitors will be encouraged to attend appointments alone and minimize time spent in waiting area before their appointments (e.g., request visitors to wait in vehicles and text message or call when ready). All visitors will be accompanied by a staff person while in the building to avoid possible accidental interactions.
* Removal non-essential communal items, such as candy, leaflets, magazines, and complimentary pens.
* Beverages (coffee, tea, water) are not be offered at this time.
* This workplace has provided a safe place for visitors to dispose of used sanitizing wipes and other personal protective equipment. An open top garbage can is located next the front door that will allow visitors to safely dispose of used items.
* When staff leave their workspace they will need to sanitize your hands prior to leaving. Upon return to their workspace; they will need to sanitize your hands.

**Deliveries –**

* Delivery zones are clearly identified and limited to receivers and deliverers only.
* We have arranged for suppliers and/or delivery persons to drop off goods at building entrance.
* We have requested contactless delivery to maintain physical distancing requirement (e.g., delivery person leaves packages in a pre-arranged location).

**Transportation –**

* Non-essential transportation or business travel has been limited and on an exceptional basis only.
* Restricted travel between offices or work locations to critical business functions have been implemented.
* At this time, removed the ability of staff (i.e.: Job Developers) to transport clients to jobs, appointments or other meetings within the community.
* Where possible staff to communicate using telephone, text message, or other communication technology.

**Elevator Use –**

* Posted occupancy limits have been established on elevators.
* Placed markings on the ground to indicate where staff/clients should stand while lining up to enter the elevator. Ensure adequate space is provided for those exiting the elevator.
* Ensure elevator panels are routinely disinfected by staff during business hours and alternatively, by our maintenance team during the evening hours.

**Communications Plan and Training:**

* North Island Employment Foundations Society has developed the necessary policies and procedures to manage our workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies include who can be at the workplace, how to address illness that arise at the workplace and how staff can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions.
* Our workplace policies ensure that staff and others showing symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from the workplace. This includes:
  + Anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 10 days. Symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headaches.
  + Anyone directed by Public Health to self-isolate.
  + Anyone who has arrived from Outside of Canada or who has had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
  + Ill staff are to report even mild symptoms.
  + Ill staff are to call 811 for further guidance related to testing and self-isolation as well as consult the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool for guidance.
  + Staff are to clean and disinfect any surfaces that ill staff member has come into contact with.
* Visitors are prohibited or limited in this workplace.
* First Aid Attendants have been provided additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional items include safety glasses and disposable non-medical masks.
* This workplace has a Remote Work Agreement policy in place.
* Our staff have received the necessary training and strategies required to address the risk of violence that may arise as clients and members of the public adapt to restrictions or modifications to this workplace.
* This workplace has a violence prevention program in place. Acts of violence or violent situations are to be reported to a Member or Management immediately. A Manager will be responsible to safely attend the situation and alert the Police Department if needed; alternatively a Manager can designate a Staff Member to contact the Police.
* We have posted signage at this workplace, including occupancy limits and effective hygiene practices.
* We have posted signage at our main entrance and staff entrance indicated who is restricted from entering the premises including staff and visitors with symptoms.
* Managers have been informed on monitoring staff and the workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.
* We have a plan in place to monitor risks. We can make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary. By using our electronic scheduling program, this office will have the ability to monitor staff and client’s entering the building. This will be monitored daily by the Management Team.
* Staff know who to report to with health and safety concerns to their immediate Supervisor or any member of the Management Team.
* When resolving any issues, we will involve our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee members.
* A member of the Management Team will provide an active COVID-19 Health Check with all staff members upon arrival to work. This will be in the form of asking staff COVID-19 health questions.