

BC PUBLIC SERVICE COVID-19 RESPONSE OVERVIEW

Updated March 16, 2020

As government continues to coordinate the provincial response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we know many BC Public Service employees also have concerns about ensuring their own health and safety. The most current information specific to the BC Public Service is available on the [MyHR website](#), but this document provides a summary of the key things you need to know.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- **Following the Provincial Health Officer's lead.** We are ensuring the decisions we make about government operations and the workplace align with the direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) to address the outbreak here in B.C. As this direction changes, we will adapt our approach. Because things can change quickly, we might not always be able to provide the answers you want right away. But we'll do our best to provide as much certainty as we can.
- **Requiring you to stay home if you're sick.** In cases of COVID-19 related absences, we are not requiring employees to provide a doctor's certificate or STO2 form to access sick pay.
- **Encouraging working from home.** Where it is operationally feasible, supervisors should support employees who can work from home. This isn't possible for many roles. But where it is possible, the more people who work from home the fewer people are in workplaces, which allows for greater social distancing.
- **Increasing workplace cleaning.** We are working with our partners and facilities leads to enhance cleaning measures and ensuring easy access to hygiene resources in all workplaces.
- **Promoting social distancing.** Ministries will implement social distancing options in face-to-face service delivery environments where practical to support the health of clients and employees.
- **Requiring self-isolation after international travel.** The PHO recommends not travelling outside Canada. However, any employees who do travel must self-isolate for 14 days immediately on their return to Canada in accordance with the PHO direction. Employees can work from home during their self-isolation where possible, or they can access sick pay.
- **Cancelling or postponing events.** We are cancelling or postponing any workplace events involving more than 50 people. Ministries will assess smaller events and meetings on a case-by-case basis with a focus on implementing social distancing measures where possible, such as reducing the number of attendees, using virtual options, and requiring anyone who is sick to stay home.
- **Minimizing work-related travel.** We are reducing work-related travel within B.C. where possible and encouraging the use of virtual meeting options as an alternative.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Your actions matter.** We are all obligated to follow the recommendations of the PHO: wash your hands, avoid touching your face, practice social distancing, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, and regularly clean surfaces. We are also all obligated to provide a safe and healthy work environment, including acting respectfully and professionally in our interactions with the public and each other. It's a stressful time, made less so if we act with kindness.
- **Stay home if you are sick.** Contact your supervisor and, if you are well enough, work from home if it's possible. If you are concerned you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms (such as fever, cough, difficulty breathing), call 811.
- **Don't travel outside of Canada.** If you do, you must self-isolate for 14 days immediately upon your return.
- **Trust our expert colleagues.** Follow and trust the most recent advice and recommendations from B.C.'s public health experts – and encourage your friends, family and colleagues to do the same. You can find current and accurate information online at the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) and [HealthLinkBC](#). The most current information specific to the BC Public Service is available on the [MyHR website](#), and if you have workplace-specific questions not answered in those online resources you can contact MyHR for support.
- **Take care of yourself.** In addition to the preventive actions specific to reducing your exposure, make sure you're taking good general care of yourself by eating healthy and staying well-rested.
- **Take care of your community.** For the vast majority of British Columbians, if you contract the virus you will experience mild symptoms. But it's important that we all act to limit the spread of COVID-19 to protect our most vulnerable friends, neighbours and colleagues and ensure they can access the care they need. The steps all British Columbians are asked to take, while inconvenient, will help support that goal.