

Vancouver Community College  
Communicable Disease Plan  
Quick Guide

2021



# Introduction

Vancouver Community College's Communicable Disease Plan promotes the health and safety of employees and students by providing information that can be used to prevent, mitigate and respond to a communicable disease outbreak.

A communicable disease is an infectious disease that is capable of being transmitted from one person or species to another. The means of transmission can be through direct contact with an individual, contact with bodily fluids of infected individuals, airborne exposure, or with objects that the infected individual has contaminated.

In the event of an emergency, VCC will notify the college community, take action to protect the health and safety of employees and students, work with the Regional Health Authority and provide additional guidance if necessary.

VCC's Communicable Disease Plan is located under Annex 5 of the Emergency Management Plan which is published on myvcc.ca Security and Risk Management's department web page.

# Scope

Communicable diseases falling within the scope of this Plan are those typically caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites and normally spread through direct or indirect human contact or through the consumption of contaminated food/water. Examples of communicable diseases include but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus
- Hepatitis A
- Norovirus
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis

# Prevent

Communicable disease prevention involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of transmission. It is important to limit the spread of communicable disease before it has the potential to cause serious illness/disease by implementing the following measures:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Use proper cough/ sneeze etiquette.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Avoid direct contact with ill persons.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle; exercise, eat a balanced diet, and get sufficient sleep.
- Avoid public places, work, or school when sick to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- Maintain appropriate immunizations and vaccinations based upon the region in which you live and work, and your exposure.
- Avoid contact with those animals that are suspected to carry the viruses.
- Avoid frequently going to crowded places whenever possible.

# Identify

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within the workplace. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the modes of transmission is the first step in reducing the incidence of disease associated with communicable diseases.

Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common symptoms associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include flu-like symptoms such as: fever, headaches, fatigue, achiness and upset stomach. The following groups of people would be at a higher risk:

- Individuals who have direct contact with a person who has influenza like illness symptoms.
- People who will or have traveled to a country or a province where influenza is prevailing.
- Instructors and students conducting practicum in hospitals where they are more likely to be in contact with infected patients.
- First Aid Attendants and Health Programs staff.

# Plan

It is important to have a plan in place within your department to respond to issues that may arise during a communicable disease emergency or whenever employees and students are unable to attend campus due to illness. VCC has developed a Return to Campus Safety Plan that has been adopted by each department to address Risk Assessment, Operational Space, People Management and Safe Work Procedures.

# Respond

Everyone at VCC has a role and responsibility to prevent the spread of communicable diseases on campus. Whenever a communicable disease emergency such as a regional communicable disease outbreak, pandemic, or public health emergency is declared by national or regional officials the following procedures should be followed. For all other routine, seasonal, or individual health issues, consult your healthcare provider. Routine, seasonal, and individual health issues do not need to be reported to college officials unless advised to do so by your healthcare provider.

## Vancouver Community College

- Advise the community in the event of a pandemic or a major epidemic on campus.
- Support the Communicable Disease Plan by ensuring awareness and education on prevention of seasonal influenza and pandemic is given to employees and students by their supervisors as needed.
- Provide First Aid if needed.

## Occupational Health and Safety

- Ensure compliance of the Communicable Disease Plan.
- Facilitate response and coordinate emergency response to epidemic or pandemic influenza at VCC and provide the appropriate communication to the VCC community.
- Act as an advisory resource for preventing/reducing transmission of influenza.
- Arrange influenza and pandemic awareness and education for employees and students as needed.

## Supervisors

- Ensure that employees and students have awareness of the Communicable Disease Plan.
- Ensure that work practices eliminate or minimize the risk of exposure to the influenza virus. Monitor the workplace to ensure that safeguards are used, precautions are taken and work procedures are followed during practicum in healthcare settings.
- Ensure that employees or students who develop symptoms seek First Aid for medical assistance immediately, follow the directions from medical professionals and stay home if necessary. Greater attention should be paid to those who return from traveling to or coming from countries where there are reports of pandemic or epidemic influenza.
- Cooperate with the instruction provided by VCC in response to epidemic or pandemic influenza at VCC.

## Employees and Students

- Read and understand the Communicable Disease Plan as necessary.
- Attend awareness and education sessions when provided.
- Be aware of pandemic and epidemic warnings and follow the guidance from the government, institutes and departments.
- Take corresponding preventive measures as necessary. Self-monitoring after traveling to, or coming from, countries or provinces where there is a high incidence of influenza.
- Report symptoms to supervisors and First Aid as soon as possible.
- Restrict contact with those who have symptoms and/or who are under medical observation.
- Follow the advice given by medical professionals during medical observations and/or treatments.

## Returning to Campus

Employees and students should take precautions to prevent spreading a communicable disease by ensuring that symptoms have passed prior to returning to campus. Remain at home if you are symptomatic and/or contagious.

Consult a health care professional for assistance and inform your supervisor or instructor. During an epidemic or pandemic, everyone must follow the guidance of the Public Health Authority.

Employees must review their department's Return to Campus Safety Plan. Students must follow their program's safety guidelines.

# Resources

For additional information about a specific communicable disease or to read the Communicable Disease Plan, please visit the following:

## BC Centre for Disease Control:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/>

## Worksafe BC:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19>

## Emergency Management Plan:

<https://employee.vcc.ca/departments/operational/security--risk-management/emergency-management-/emergency-management-plan/>