

	Policy Title: Communicable Disease Plan	Policy No: AD-013
	Authority: CAO	Classification: Human Resources
	Date Adopted: Sept 7, 2021	Motion No: N/A
Historical Changes: Included the Visitor Health Declaration process in		

Purpose:

This Policy is designed to promote the health and safety of District of Sooke ("District") employees, visitors, and contractors by providing appropriate information that is required to prevent communicable disease based on the information from the Provincial Health Officer ("PHO"), the Ministry of Health, the Province of British Columbia, and WorkSafeBC.

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace. It also involves implementing additional measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk.

The District recognizes the risks and challenges that communicable diseases present and have implemented measures to create and maintain a safe workplace and require all to participate in and adhere to the required measures.

Scope:

This Policy applies to all employees including exempt and Council.

Definitions:

Defined word	Definition
Communicable Disease	means illnesses caused by an infectious agent or its toxins that occur through the direct or indirect transmission of an infectious agent or its products from an infected individual or another vector. The communicable diseases of concern are those that circulate in the community from time to time and as a result may be introduced into a workplace, such as COVID-19, norovirus, and influenza. When warranted, the Provincial Health Officer or a medical health officer ("Public Health") may indicate communicable diseases of concern to B.C. workplaces. Communicable Diseases are most commonly spread from an infected person through: • Respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze • Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands • Touching something with a virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands
District	means the Corporation of the District of Sooke.
Health and Safety Committee	means the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or Fire OHS Committee, as appropriate.

Risk Identification:

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including Coronavirus, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the methods of transmission is important in reducing the incidence of disease associated with communicable diseases.

Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include fever and other flu-like symptoms. When traveling abroad, please be aware of communicable disease threats as certain communicable diseases are endemic to certain regions of the world.

Communicable Disease Name	Is a Vaccine Preventable?	Description of Symptoms and Transmission
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Yes	<u>Symptoms:</u> • Fever • Cough • Shortness of breath • Breathing difficulties <u>Transmission:</u> • Person-to-person via droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking • Sharing items • Touching contaminated items.
Influenza	Yes	<u>Symptoms:</u> • Fever • Cough • Sore throat • Runny or stuffy nose • Muscle/body aches • Headache • Fatigue • Sometimes vomiting and/or diarrhea <u>Transmission:</u> • Person-to-person via droplets

Risk Controls:

To develop this Policy, a hazard analysis was completed based on the “Hierarchy of Controls for communicable disease” as recommended by the PHO. This framework addresses Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls and lastly, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce transmission. The application of these control measures will assist in mitigating potential hazards to maintain a safe workplace.

HAZARDS	CONTROL	MITIGATION
----------------	----------------	-------------------

<u>Biological</u> : inadvertent exposure to a viral contagion or inadvertent contamination of a shared workspace or common area with easily transmissible viral particles by any who is carrying or showing symptoms of COVID-19	Engineering (i.e. Renovations)	- Some workspaces may require physical barriers installed, if not already installed - Place hand sanitizer stations near entrance doors, pay stations and other high touch locations for customers and employees - Remove lids from garbage receptacles to allow “no-touch” disposal where reasonable
Communicable disease-related hazards include: <u>Physical</u>: touching surfaces that are potentially contaminated with communicable disease particles <u>Biological</u>: inadvertent exposure to a viral contagion or inadvertent contamination of a shared workspace or common area with easily transmissible viral particles <u>Chemical</u>: exposure to disinfectants/nitrile or latex gloves/environmental sensitivities <u>Psycho-social</u>: mental health awareness	Administrative (i.e. Policy and/or Procedure)	- Provide a Policy and/or an Operating Procedure which addresses the following: - Self Monitoring - Stay Home When Sick - Handwashing or Sanitizing - Respiratory Etiquette - Use of Masks - Proper Mask Use - Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting - Building Ventilation - Promotion of Employee Vaccinations - Mental Health Awareness - Physical Distancing
Biological and Chemical (as above)	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*	Note: information regarding use of PPE is addressed by the policy and procedure
*Note: Firefighters responding to emergencies for possible or confirmed communicable disease emergencies will follow departmental directives, plans and BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) guidance. Firefighters will also continue to wear PPE appropriate to the risk, and in accordance with BCEHS and the PHO direction.		

Most employees will not require PPE for protection against communicable disease unless they are in specific situations such as being in common areas including meetings rooms, hallways and when physical distancing cannot be maintained, or when cleaning public washrooms or treating wastewater.

A large portion of the Policy relies on the implementation of the associated operating procedure which contains more details in respect to the controls listed in the above table. To address communicable disease health and safety concerns in the workplace, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), or delegate, will be communicating updates in respect to communicable disease and any changes to necessary steps or actions required.

Principles:

Self Monitoring

- 1.1 Pre-mitigation, including reporting and self-screening, will help to identify possible communicable disease positive employees and proactively remove risks that they could inadvertently introduce into the workplace.

Stay Home When Sick

- 2.1 Employees with communicable disease symptoms should stay home if they have a cold or flu symptoms, or other gastrointestinal (vomiting or diarrhea) symptoms and not come to work for at least twenty-four (24) hours, or longer if symptoms have not resolved.
- 2.2 Employees may return to regular work activities if:
 - i. Your fever* is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications (i.e. Tylenol, Advil), and
 - ii. There is improvement in symptoms consistent with the communicable disease as identified and listed on the BC Centre for Disease Control website. Coughing may go on for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean you need to continue to stay home.

* Fever = A temperature of 100°F or 37.8°C or higher. Temperature should be measured without the use of fever-reducing medicines. The employee should contact their medical health provider for further guidance and direction and call 8-1-1.

- 2.3 Sick Leave Benefits

Employees are required to stay home if they are feeling sick. All permanent employees are entitled to sick leave pay for absences related to illness in accordance with the Collective Agreement. If employees who are in positions that can work from home, may request to do so.

Handwashing or Sanitizing

- 3.1 Employees should practice proper “hand hygiene” techniques often, as it is the single-most effective way of reducing the spread of infection.
- 3.3 Touching your face, including eyes, nose and mouth should be avoided and hands washed or sanitized following such touching.
- 3.4 Employees are encouraged to wash or sanitize hands directly after handshaking.

Respiratory Etiquette

- 4.1 All staff are expected to follow cough and sneeze etiquette, which are a combination of preventative measures that minimizes the transmission of communicable diseases via droplet or airborne routes.

Use of Masks

- 5.1 A Non-Medical Mask is a protective barrier worn on the face, covering at least the nose and mouth, and is used to contain large droplets generated when talking, coughing, or sneezing by the person wearing the mask. Non-Medical Masks help minimize the spread of potentially infectious material from the infected wearer to other people. Non-Medical Masks are not considered full protection.
- 5.2 Fit-tested N95 masks prevent infectious material from entering an employee’s breathing zone.

5.3 Masks are to be worn at a minimum according to recommendations and guidelines from:

- Provincial Health Officer
- WorkSafeBC

5.4 No employee should be discouraged from wearing a face mask should they feel more comfortable in doing so, or requested by a supervisor, regardless if fully vaccinated or not.

Proper Mask Use

6.1 If an employee chooses or requested to wear a face mask, it is important that the wearing of the mask is done so correctly. Improper donning and removal of a face mask creates greater risk of infection. Please refer to the Operating Procedure.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting

7.1 Part of our role in maintaining a health and safe workplace for employees, contractors, and visitors means that routine cleaning and disinfecting is of great importance. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can also reduce the risk of infection.

7.2 Always follow standard practices and appropriate regulations specific to the type of facility for minimum standards for cleaning and disinfection.

7.3 The following communicable disease safety measures include:

- Cleaning and disinfection of highly touched surfaces
- Frequent handwashing
- Providing hand hygiene options for employees, contractors, and visitors

7.4 Although janitorial services are provided at Municipal Hall and Fire Halls throughout the week, employees should disinfect common areas and other high touch surfaces after use. If in doubt about the cleanliness of an area or item, employees are encouraged to disinfect the area or item before and after use to reduce the risk of contamination.

7.5 Employees should ensure regularly touched surfaces are disinfected frequently within their own workspace(s).

7.6 Employees who use municipal vehicles must ensure that high contact surfaces within the vehicle are routinely disinfected. Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the Operating Procedure.

7.7 In the event of a potential or a confirmed communicable disease case in a shared workspace, workstation or with a person using shared equipment, the station/equipment should not be used until a deep clean can be performed which is to be delegated by the employee's supervisor or delegate. Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the Operating Procedure. Employees affected by the deep clean will be accommodated to ensure safety during the cleaning period, which will be communicated by the supervisor, or delegate.

7.8 During periods of communicable disease events, clean high-touch surfaces **at least twice a day** or as often as determined is necessary.

7.9 The following are examples of high-touch surfaces:

- Pens
- Tables

- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Handles and stair rails
- Elevator buttons
- Desks, keyboards, phones
- Toilets, faucets, and sinks

Building Ventilation

- 8.1 The necessary control measure exists as a regular operational task.
- 8.2 Parks, Environmental Services, and Facilities maintains all buildings HVAC systems and the systems are on a preventative maintenance schedule.

Promotion of Employee Vaccinations

- 9.1 The District will support Public Health messaging for vaccinations against pandemic or community diseases and may collaborate with Public Health to offer vaccination clinics in public facilities.
- 9.2 The District recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs which reduce illnesses, disabilities, and death from community acquired diseases. Employees are encouraged to participate in public health vaccination programs.
- 9.3 The District recognizes every employee's right to determine their own health choices and will not mandate or discriminate against employees who choose not to vaccinate.
- 9.4 The following are reasons to get vaccinated:
 - Vaccine-preventable diseases have not disappeared – The viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death still exist and can be passed on to those who are not protected by vaccines
 - Vaccines will help keep you healthy – Vaccines can prevent short term illnesses and prevent long term chronic disability or increased risk of cancer depending on disease.
 - Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise – Like eating healthy foods, exercising, and getting regular check-ups, vaccines play a vital role in keeping you healthy. Vaccines are one of the most convenient and safest preventive care measures available.
 - Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death – Vaccine-preventable infections can be deadly. For example, every year in the US, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 50,000 adults died from vaccine-preventable diseases.
 - Vaccines are safe – Potential side effects associated with vaccines are uncommon and much less severe than the diseases they prevent.
 - Vaccines will not cause the diseases they are designed to prevent – Vaccines contain either killed or weakened viruses, making it impossible to get the disease from the vaccine.
 - Young and healthy people can get very sick, too – Infants and older adults are at increased risk for serious infections and complications, but vaccine-preventable diseases can strike anyone. If you are young and healthy, getting vaccinated can help you stay that way.
 - Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive – Diseases not only have a direct impact on individuals and their families, but also carry a high price tag for society as a whole.
 - When you get sick, your children, grandchildren, and parents may be at risk, too – Adults are the most common source of pertussis (whooping cough) infection in infants which can be deadly for babies. When you get vaccinated, you are protecting yourself and your family as well as those in your community who may not be able to be vaccinated.

- Your family and co-workers need you – Millions of adults get sick from vaccine-preventable diseases, causing them to miss work and leaving them unable to care for those who depend on them, including their children and/or aging parents.

Mental Health Awareness

- 10.1 A communicable disease event may cause increased levels of stress or anxiety for employees. This is because some communicable diseases are new or evolved so the scientific facts about the hazards and risks of the disease may be unknown or uncertain. Uncertainty increases stress.
- 10.2 Practice self-care. Employees who feel they are experiencing negative mental health implications should seek assistance as soon as possible. Steps are outlined in the Operating Procedure.

Physical Distancing

- 11.1 During periods of communicable disease events:
 - Physical distancing reduces the potential of transmitting communicable diseases through airborne droplets. There is a possibility that even non-symptomatic carriers of a communicable disease may transmit the virus in this manner, so physical distancing should be observed, even in cases when people do not display symptoms that communicable disease.
 - Communal interior doors are to remain open throughout the workday to reduce contact with door handles.
 - Access to District workplaces should be limited and alternative methods, such as video or conference calls, be used for conducting business to prevent close personal contact.
 - Communal dishes and utensils must be washed or placed in the dishwasher immediately. Dishes are not permitted to be left in the sink.
 - Employees will be asked to refrain from providing and consuming communal foods.
 - Employees should remain on their primary work floor and not visit other floors in the building unless absolutely necessary. Fire Department employees should access the lounge and kitchen through the back stairwell. All other employees should access Council Chamber via the main stairwell. The use of the third-floor kitchen and lounge will be restricted to Fire Department employees. Fire Department employees should refrain from using the washroom facilities on the third floor.
 - Whenever possible, employees should travel alone in vehicles to ensure physical distancing. If this is not possible, masks must be worn.

Visitor Health Declaration

- 12.1 Before entering into a municipal workplace, visitors must declare that they are not sick or potentially sick and won't be transmitting any illness into the workplace.
- 12.2 If visitors answered 'yes' to any of the declaration questions, visitors are not permitted into the workplace.
- 12.3 Visitors must provide their contact information to reception prior to approval of admittance through to the work area.

Responsibilities:

- 13.1 Employer

- Monitor and review communicable disease-related information issued by regional health officers or the Provincial Health Officer
- Implement policies and practices to support employees who have symptoms of communicable disease
- Provide hand-hygiene facilities with appropriate supplies and use policies and signage to remind employees to wash their hands regularly and to cover coughs and sneezes
- Maintain a clean environment through routine cleaning processes appropriate for the workplace and task
- Ensure that building ventilation is adequate, and systems are properly maintained
- Support employees in receiving vaccinations for vaccine-preventable conditions
- Provide employees with communication and training surrounding safe work practices, including this Communicable Disease Safety Plan, and encouraged employees to ask questions and provide feedback to managers

In addition, when advised by Public Health and during a period of elevated risk, we must:

- Follow the directions from medical health officers and the regional health authority
- Follow all orders, guidance, recommendations, and notices issued by the PHO
- Reassess policies and practices based on updated guidance from regional or provincial health authorities

13.2 Supervisors

- Ensure that employees are adequately instructed on the work procedures and preventative measures at the work location
- Ensure workplace measures are being followed by employees
- Communicate with department Manager regarding employee's concerns or illnesses (privacy and confidential must be maintained – seek guidance from Human Resources when clarification is required)

13.3 Employees

- Report any communicable disease safety concerns, unsafe conditions or acts to their supervisor or to the Health and Safety Committee
- Wash hands frequently
- Follow proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Follow established communicable disease prevention and practices as directed by the employer or supervisor
- Use Personal Protective Equipment ("PPE") as instructed and as required
- Know the location of washing facilities, including hand sanitizing dispensing stations
- Sanitize shared or common work surfaces and equipment after use
- If you become sick with symptoms compatible with communicable disease, stay at home and notify the manager and seek medical health guidance
- Become familiar with available health and mental health (EFAP or MFAP) benefits
- Ask questions and provide feedback to managers on the District's communicable disease prevention safe work practices

13.4 Health and Safety Committee

- Participate in conducting risk assessments
- Participate in identifying and resolving workplace safety issues and concerns
- Review this Policy annually and provide recommendations for improvement to the Employer, as required

Confidentiality:

- 14.1 Supervisors who become aware of an employee who exhibits communicable disease symptoms or is diagnosed with a communicable disease must not release the employee's name, identifying information, or condition to other employees. All employee healthcare concerns must be forwarded to Human Resources. Supervisors and employees may contact Human Resources with any questions or concerns they may have regarding workplace issues surrounding communicable disease.
- 14.2 All employee medical information is treated as private and confidential and will be handled in compliance with legal requirements.

General:

- 15.1 This policy and Operating Procedure will be incorporated into the new employee orientation process.
- 15.2 Designated First Aid Attendants and supervisors will be trained in how to monitor employees for symptomatic signs of communicable diseases. First Aid attendants will receive further training in what steps to take if someone they are treating is suspected of having a communicable disease.

References:

Policy Number:	AD-013
Policy Owner:	Chief Administrative Officer
Endorsed by:	Leadership
Final Approval:	Chief Administrative Officer
Date Approved:	Sept 7, 2021
Review Date:	September 7, 2026
Revision Date:	September 24, 2021
Related Policies:	• Refusal of Unsafe Work OP
Related Publications:	• BC Centre for Disease Control • District of Sooke • Provincial Government of BC • Reportable Disease Data Dashboard • WorkSafeBC • OP-018 Communicable Disease • District of Sooke Occupational Health and Safety Program

Contact Information:

Position: Chief Administrative Officer
nmcinnis@sooke.ca

APPENDIX A:

Communicable Disease Front Counter Closing Duties

- 1) Using disinfectant wipe or peroxide-based disinfectant and microfiber cloth, wipe down the following:
 - a) Reception Area:
 - Front counter surfaces
 - Front of cash drawer and paper money holders inside
 - Desktop and phone, including mouth and earpiece

- Glass barriers (both sides)
- Front door handles
- Glass door (both sides)

b) Kitchen:

- Fridge Handles
- Sink Taps and faucet
- Tables
- Paper Towel Dispenser
- Door Handles (incl back door)
- Water/cube dispensers

c) Bathrooms:

- Sink Taps and faucets
- Toilet flush handle
- Paper Towel Dispenser
- Door Handles

2) Using the 70% isopropyl alcohol/30% water electronics cleaning solution, wipe down the following:

a) Reception Area:

- Communal keyboards and mouse
- Interac machine
- Printer
- Receipt Printer
- Bar Code Reader
- Keyboard
- Mouse
- Monitor screens