

INTRODUCTION

UVic is committed to providing safe and healthy environments for all members of the university community. In alignment with the [BC Restart plan](#) and the Post-Secondary [Return-to-Campus Guidelines](#), and following [WorkSafeBC](#) requirements, this communicable disease (CD) plan outlines the ongoing prevention measures that everyone needs to follow as we transition from prescriptive COVID-19 safety measures to general communicable disease prevention measures that are guided by public health.

SCOPE

This CD plan applies to all units, staff, faculty and students engaged in any university activity including in-person instruction and related academic activities, research, and administrative, operational and ancillary services.

This CD plan is effective as of July 15, 2021 and replaces all existing COVID-19 safe work plans (SWPs).

Please note that units are also no longer required to create or customize their own safety plans, as the CD plan and ongoing prevention measures apply campus-wide.

TRANSITION PERIOD

During the transitional months of July and August the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and WorkSafeBC are recommending employers still maintain some existing safety measures as we gradually and safely ease restrictions in anticipation of the full return to campus activities in the fall. To assist units and leaders with this process, please review the Transitional Safety Guidance, which is a companion document to the CD plan.

For example, effective July 1, 2021, and in accordance with the PHO direction, the university recommends that anyone over the age of 12 who is not fully vaccinated wear a mask in indoor public/common spaces; in-person learning facilities including classrooms and lecture halls, teaching and computing labs, art studios, music or theatre facilities; study spaces; and research labs and facilities. At Step 4 of the BC Restart Plan, no earlier than September 7, 2021, we are expecting the masking guidance will be amended to a personal choice.

In addition to this CD plan, some units may still be required to follow applicable sector-specific safety guidelines or ongoing PHO requirements (e.g. gatherings and events). Similarly, those engaged in travel for research or study (e.g. field research, community research, field schools and field trips) will still need to follow local, provincial or federal travel restrictions, local community entry requirements, as well as university requirements for international student travel or field safety plans. Please visit the [OHSE Return to Campus website](#) for more information and to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

Communicable disease prevention focuses on basic risk reduction principles to reduce the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. The fundamental components of communicable disease prevention include both ongoing measures to maintain at all times and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health during periods of elevated risk. OHSE will regularly monitor and review communicable disease information from public health authorities, and update the campus community of any changes affecting university activities, including updating the CD plan as required.



ONGOING PREVENTION MEASURES

Supporting employees and students to stay at home when sick

- All employees and students must continue to do a daily health self-assessment.
- If you are ill or have symptoms of a communicable disease (e.g. fever and/or chills, recent onset of coughing, diarrhea):
 - please stay home
 - notify your supervisor or instructor of your absence
 - consult the COVID-19 self-assessment tool to see if you should get tested, and contact 811 if you require medical advice
- Unit leaders should follow the sick leave provisions in the appropriate collective agreement to support employees, and contact their Human Resources Consultant if advice is required.
- Instructors should follow established protocols to support student absence due to illness, and contact their Faculty Relations Consultant if advice is required.
- For those employees who are able to work at home while they are recovering from their illness/symptoms, please refer to the [HR remote working](#) website which includes guidance on setting up your home workstation, ergonomic tips, FAQs and other resources.

Promoting hand-washing and hygiene practices

- Washing your hands regularly, or using hand sanitizers if a washroom or sink is not readily available, is one of the most simple and effective ways to minimize the spread of communicable diseases.
- In addition, covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough will also help to reduce the spread of germs.
- For the fall term, all washroom facilities on campus will be re-opened and available for employees, students and the public to facilitate regular handwashing. The university will also continue to supply hand sanitizer stations at all main entrances to buildings, and additional locations in buildings with higher occupancy levels, to promote hand hygiene.
- Units who provide services in busy client-facing settings such as retail checkouts, kiosks, food service counters and other similar areas, are encouraged to keep a supply of portable hand sanitizer available for use.
- For outdoor or off-campus university activities, individuals should ensure that hand sanitizer is supplied if washing facilities are not available (e.g. outdoor events, vehicles, field locations, etc.).
- The university will be developing and posting signage throughout campus to remind everyone of these important practices.

Routine cleaning

- The university is committed to maintaining a clean environment through routine cleaning practices, and implementing enhanced cleaning practices if directed by public health during any periods of elevated risk.
- For the fall term general campus cleaning by Facilities Management, and cleaning in student housing by Residence Services, will return to pre-pandemic practices and schedules as recommended by the PHO and Post-Secondary RTC Guidelines.
- Individual units or office areas are not required to disinfect surfaces or shared equipment (e.g. photocopiers, keyboards, desks, appliances, etc.) as part of their usual housekeeping practices.

- Areas or units which may have specialized cleaning practices due to their activities or regulatory requirements (e.g. laboratories, health clinics, isolation rooms, food service areas, event planners, etc.) should continue to follow those practices, in addition to any other requirements that may still be in place from the PHO.

Building Ventilation (HVAC Systems)

- Following the direction of WorkSafeBC and the PHO, institutions must ensure that building heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are operating and maintained in accordance with WorkSafeBC requirements and relevant ASHRAE Standards.
- Ahead of the fall term, Facilities Management has been assessing building HVAC systems to ensure those systems continue to meet WorkSafeBC requirements.
- FMGT is also taking extra steps to further improve indoor air quality including upgrading filters to MERV-13 rating and increasing air flow wherever possible, and introducing a daily pre-occupancy air change (flush) which will ensure HVAC systems exceed WSBC requirements.
- As the weather permits, windows may be opened to also improve air circulation and where it does not interfere with the proper functioning of an HVAC system.

Supporting Vaccination

- Getting vaccinated is the most important tool supporting the BC Restart Plan.
- The university encourages everyone who is eligible and able, to consider vaccination to protect yourself and others.
- UVic employees are [entitled to up to three hours of paid leave](#) to be vaccinated against COVID-19, if required.
- Note: the COVID-19 vaccine is not mandatory in order to study, work, visit or live on campus.
- [Learn more about the benefits and safety of the vaccine](#), and [register](#) to receive an invite to book a vaccine appointment.

RESPONDING TO ELEVATED RISK

- The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may elevate from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level or within a workplace.
- In addition to maintaining the ongoing prevention measures, OHSE will monitor public health information and be responsive to any further directives from the local medical health officer or provincial health officer which could include, for example, implementing enhanced cleaning measures, distancing requirements or masking guidance.
- Any changes to prevention measures during periods of elevated risk will be communicated to those affected in our campus community.

COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING

- This CD plan will be available on university websites and shared widely with our campus community.
- Leaders should ensure that everyone on their teams have reviewed the CD Plan and understand and follow the measures in place.
- The prevention measures will be reinforced through campus signage, social media and other communication tools on a regular basis.

- The ongoing review and evaluation of the CD plan will involve the joint University Safety Committee, as part of its annual consultation process on health and safety programs.
- Monitoring of the ongoing prevention measures is shared responsibility of leaders for those areas and individuals they supervise, joint local safety committees as part of regular building inspections, and OHSE.
- Individuals should report any health and safety concerns to their supervisor, who is responsible to follow-up and address any concerns.
- Individuals may also contact their union representative, joint local safety committee, or OHSE for assistance with a safety concern or question.