

# Communicable Disease Safety Plan

November 23, 2022



University  
of Victoria

Occupational Health,  
Safety and Environment

UVic is committed to providing safe and healthy environments for all members of the university community. In alignment with the [BC CDC post-secondary public health](#) guidance and following [WorkSafeBC](#) requirements, this safety plan outlines our communicable disease prevention measures that everyone needs to follow.

## SCOPE

This 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.

In addition to this plan, some units may still be required to follow applicable sector-specific safety guidelines or ongoing public health requirements. 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 field safety plans. Please contact [OHSE](#) if you have questions about any specialized safety requirements, and visit the [OHSE COVID-19 website](#) for the most up to date information.

## 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 includes both core 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, and update the campus community of any changes affecting university activities, including updating this plan as required.

## CORE SAFETY MEASURES

### Daily Health Self-Assessment

- All employees and students must continue to do a [daily health self-assessment](#).
- If you are ill or have [symptoms of COVID-19](#):
  - please stay home until you feel well enough to return to regular activities and no longer have a fever
  - 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
- Starting November 17, 2022, the [BC CDC](#) advises that people who have COVID-19 are no longer required to self-isolate for a defined period of time (previously 5 or 10 days depending on vaccination status). However, it is still important for people with symptoms to stay home as much as possible to reduce any potential spread of illness until your symptoms have improved, and you are able to participate in your usual activities.



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## Supporting employees and students to stay home when sick

- 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 the leader of their academic unit (Chair/Director/Dean) if advice is required.
- Please review the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment and Sick Leave protocol](#) for more information
- 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.

## Mask Use

- Masks are no longer required in public indoor spaces across the province. Wearing a mask is now a personal choice; however, masks are still strongly encouraged on campus in indoor public spaces where people may be in close proximity or anywhere people feel more comfortable to do so.
- Exterior building doors and digicasters across campus will communicate that masks are encouraged on campus.
- Masks continue to be required in some locations on campus based on BC CDC or sector-specific guidelines, including healthcare locations.

## 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.
- All washroom facilities on campus are open 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 their customer and client use.
- The university will continue to post 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.
- Areas or units which may have specialized cleaning practices and schedules 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 protocols, in addition to any other requirements that may still be in place from public health.

- Individual units or office areas should clean and disinfect surfaces or shared equipment (e.g. photocopiers, keyboards, desks, appliances, etc.) in accordance with their usual housekeeping practices.

### **Building Ventilation (HVAC Systems)**

- Following the direction of WorkSafeBC and public health, 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.
- Facilities Management monitors and maintains HVAC systems to ensure those systems continue to meet WorkSafeBC requirements.
- The university has also taken extra steps to further improve indoor air quality as described in the section, Enhanced Ventilation.

### **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, and to register for a [booster](#) as directed by public health.
- UVic employees are [entitled to up to three hours of paid leave](#) to be vaccinated against COVID-19, if required.
- [Learn more about the benefits and safety of the vaccine](#), and [register](#) to receive an invite to book a vaccine appointment.

## **ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES**

### **Enhanced Ventilation**

The university continues to maintain the following additional measures for building HVAC systems:

- HVAC filter upgrades to MERV-13 in the majority of buildings
- increased frequency of air filter replacement throughout the fall and winter semesters
- increased supply of fresh air into occupied spaces
- increased rate of air exchange where possible (i.e. total airflow in occupied spaces)
- daily pre-occupancy air change (flush) for building HVAC systems

For naturally ventilated classrooms that are not serviced by a building HVAC system, HEPA air-purifying units have been installed.

### **Rapid Testing**

Rapid antigen tests are widely available for those who wish to use them, but are not required for in-person campus activities. [Rapid at-home test kits](#) are available free of charge to UVic students, staff and faculty at the Bookstore or Campus Security using your ONECard, and also at most local pharmacies.

## **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.
- OHSE will monitor public health information and be responsive to any further directives from the local medical health officer or provincial health officer.
- Any changes to prevention measures during periods of elevated risk will be communicated to those affected in our campus community.

## **COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING**

- This plan will be available on university websites and shared widely with our campus community.
- Leaders should ensure that everyone on their teams have reviewed this 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 this plan will involve the joint University Safety Committee, as part of its annual consultation process on health and safety programs.
- Monitoring of the prevention and safety measures is a shared responsibility of leaders for those areas and individuals they supervise, joint local safety committees as part of regular building inspections as appropriate, 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.