



# City of Langley Communicable Disease Plan

*Current Version: November 21, 2022*

This document lists control measures for operations to implement during pandemic periods. The origins of this document are from the Corporate COVID-19 Safety Plan and Exposure Control Plan.

## Contents

Overview .....	3
Purpose .....	4
Scope.....	4
Right to refuse unsafe work .....	4
Seeking advice.....	4
Hazard analysis and understanding risk .....	5
Risk matrix.....	5
Stress, anxiety and mental health awareness .....	6
Monitoring risk and communication effectiveness .....	6
Hierarchy of controls for communicable diseases .....	6
Stay home when sick .....	7
Facility cleaning.....	8
Building ventilation maintenance .....	8
Barriers for droplet control.....	8
Hand washing and sanitizing stations.....	8
Occupancy limit controls .....	9
Communication to staff and clients.....	9
Vaccinations .....	9
Cough and sneeze safety .....	9
Hand washing and sanitizing.....	9
Psychological safety and mental health promotion .....	10
Wearing masks.....	10

## Overview

As an organization, we are committed to the health and safety of our employees and the public we serve. This Plan represents a range of controls to respond to a pandemic or other communicable diseases. Provincial Health Officer (PHO), the Ministry of Health, Fraser Health Medical Health Officers (MHO), the Province of B.C. and WorkSafe BC (WSBC) generally set out the guidance and controls to reduce the risks for communicable disease in society.

As leaders and supervisors, we are accountable for addressing and responding to communicable diseases like COVID-19, including the psychological safety concerns raised by our employees.

Thank you for your commitment.

**City of Langley**

## Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to:

- Ensure the organization can respond quickly and appropriately to new or seasonal pandemic diseases, especially during the latter period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and other possible communicable disease events;
- Maintain corporate history of pandemic controls;
- Provide guidance for operations and employees to protect themselves; and
- Maintain compliance with WSBC and Public Health expectations of employers.

All operations are required to know and adhere to this Plan and any operational-specific Plans that require control methods not described in this document. Operational-specific Plans need to be documented for staff to understand and implement.

## Scope

This Communicable Disease Plan applies to all City employees, elected officials, contractors, volunteers and members of the public/visitors. Communicable disease outbreaks at specific sites may require limited implementation of additional controls.

## Right to refuse unsafe work

Our employees have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard. An undue hazard is an “unwarranted, inappropriate, excessive, or disproportionate” risk, above and beyond the potential exposure a general member of the public would face through regular, day-to-day activity. In these circumstances, the worker should follow some specific steps to resolve the issue.

The employee must report any undue hazard to their supervisor for investigation. Each refusal of unsafe work is addressed on a case-by-case basis and will follow the WSBC prescribed procedure.

## Seeking advice

Implementing communicable disease controls may not always be clear. The Human Resources and Safety Officer and Members of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee at the City

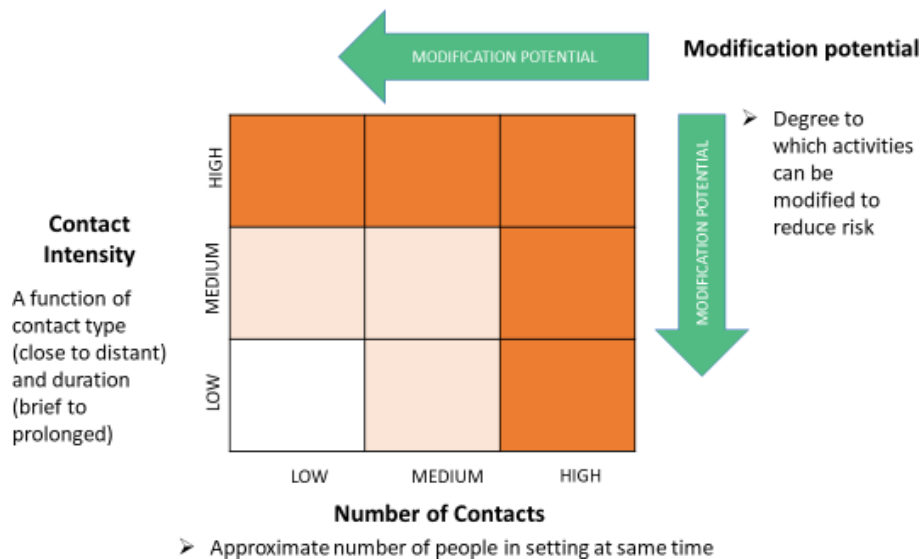
are available to answer questions raised by managers and supervisors regarding communicable disease and risk management in the workplace.

## Hazard analysis and understanding risk

WSBC guidance for Communicable Disease Plans requires that employers remain informed of developing communicable disease issues. The City of Langley and Fraser Health work collaboratively together for many public health concerns and challenges; this includes following public health guidance and direction to implement controls to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Through ongoing dialogue and partnership with Fraser Health, the City is well-positioned to remain aware of emerging communicable diseases. The City will rely on Fraser Health to assess and inform the City of disease hazards and risks to our citizens and staff alike.

### Risk matrix

In collaboration with Public Health, the risk of transmission in City of Langley facilities is subject to two primary variables that we need to modify to reduce transmission risk: contact intensity (how close you are to someone and for how long) and the number of contacts (how many people are in the same setting at the same time).



Assessment and understanding risk factors that impact disease transmission assist with implementing controls. The risk matrix above may guide decisions to implement certain controls. Public Health direction to specific control measures required will be addressed by the City.

### **Stress, anxiety and mental health awareness**

Psychological safety risks are present during communicable disease events and staff should practice self-care. Emotional stress, anxiety or concern is natural under periods of community disease occurrences. The unseen risk of a microbial pathogen commonly creates greater anxiety levels than a clearly visible hazard like a fire or a plume of smoke. Anyone who feels they are experiencing negative mental health implications should seek assistance as soon as possible, and those with access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) are advised to contact EAP for further support.

### **Monitoring risk and communication effectiveness**

The City's Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC) are active partners in employee health and safety. They are encouraged to review and recommend improvements to communicable disease controls. They will be informed of emerging communicable disease events from public health alerts and this information will be discussed during JOHSC meetings; meeting minutes are posted on Safety Boards located at every facility in the City, accessible to all staff.

## **Hierarchy of controls for communicable diseases**

Public Health may direct the City of Langley to implement specific controls to eliminate or limit the number of infections from communicable diseases. Communicable diseases controls are categorized into a hierarchy of effectiveness. The hierarchy below is not an exhaustive list. However, these controls effectively control periodic communicable disease events and were used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Hierarchy of Controls**

1. **Elimination:** Remove the hazard, the communicable disease, from the workplace.
  - a. Stay home when sick
  - b. Physical distancing
  - c. Cleaning and/or disinfecting high touch surfaces

- d. Cleaning and/or disinfecting contaminated surfaces
- 2. **Engineering controls:** Contain the hazard or reduce the risk with an engineered control.
  - a. Barriers
  - b. Well maintained ventilation systems
  - c. Addition of HEPA air scrubbers
  - d. Placement or installation of hand sanitation stations
- 3. **Administrative controls:** Reduce the risk through organizational processes or behaviour change of employees and/or clients.
  - a. Work from home
  - b. Promote vaccinations for communicable diseases
  - c. Promote safe cough and sneezing methods
  - d. Wash or sanitize hands frequently
  - e. Formal or informal daily health checks before entering the workplace
  - f. Capacity limits for rooms, structures or equipment
  - g. Cleaning or sanitizing shared tools, equipment and workstations, after use
  - h. Communication and signage of expected actions of employees and clients
  - i. Promote awareness and availability of mental health supports
- 4. **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Reduce risk by equipment worn by an employee.
  - a. Respirators
  - b. Droplet protection eye or face shields or sealed goggles
  - c. Gloves
  - d. Gowns
  - e. Disposable non-medical mask
  - f. Three-ply reusable cloth mask

## **The City has implemented and maintains the following controls:**

### **Stay home when sick**

As of November 17, 2022, BCCDC advised that people who have Covid-19 are no longer required to self-isolate; however, people with symptoms of Covid-19 should take measures

to prevent spreading of the illness to others by staying home when sick, until their symptom improve to the point where they are able to safely resume their regular activities.

### **Facility cleaning**

Building Service Workers within the Recreation, Culture and Community Services Department maintain systems to regularly clean facilities. Maintenance of these systems is expected and ready to expand cleaning requirements when public health directs additional cleaning requirements. Existing flu season cleaning protocols will continue to be activated during seasonal communicable disease periods.

A minimum of once per day cleaning including disinfection of common area high touch point surfaces should be maintained; with increased cleaning and disinfecting is implemented during periods of increased cases of communicable disease in the workplace.

### **Building ventilation maintenance**

The Building Maintenance Supervisor maintains a preventative maintenance program for HVAC systems. This necessary control measure exists as a regular operational task and is essential for maintaining appropriate indoor air quality and temperature.

### **Barriers for droplet control**

Barriers installed for the COVID-19 pandemic remain in place if they are not affecting service delivery. Management will make assessments to keep barriers as permanent fixtures against future communicable disease events, prevent other hazards or remove the barriers.

### **Hand washing and sanitizing stations**

Management, both administrative and field, are required to maintain access to hand washing or hand sanitizer. Use and distribution established during the COVID-19 pandemic and cold/flu season need to continue until further notice. Hand sanitizer is available from the City's Buyer/Storekeeper upon request for pick-up or delivery.

The Building Service Workers maintain hand-sanitizing stations at City facilities.

Signage and other communications will support hand washing or sanitization behaviours of clients/visitors and staff.

## **Occupancy limit controls**

The City is currently operating at full capacity; however, City staff are advised to respect the personal space of others during the Covid-19 pandemic and the cold/flu season, and if physical distancing can reasonably be maintained, this is advised. The City continues to use technology for virtual meetings when necessary for those who are not ready to participate in in-person meetings.

## **Communication to staff and clients**

### ***Vaccinations***

The City of Langley supports public health's promotion of vaccinations against communicable diseases. Support includes corporate messaging to employees, allowing clinics on City property, and possibly allowing time to get vaccinated during working hours.

On November 17, 2021, the City gave notice of a vaccination policy requiring all employees be fully vaccinated by January 24, 2022 to work at a City worksite, unless they have an approved exemption that relates to prohibited grounds of discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code.

No employee will ask about the vaccination status of any person for any reason.

As per the PHO, and as of April 8, 2022, the public is no longer required to show proof of vaccination to participate in programming or enter a City of Langley facility. However, at this time, the City maintains the requirement of proof of vaccination for employees, contractors and volunteers.

### ***Cough and sneeze safety***

The City of Langley will post signage and use other communications to educate or remind employees and clients/visitors to cough and sneeze safely into their arms, elbow or tissue.

### ***Hand washing and sanitizing***

The City of Langley will post signage and use other communications to educate or remind employees and clients to wash or sanitize their hands regularly during communicable disease events. The City has hand washing facilities available indoors and hand sanitizer is available for all employees.

***Psychological safety and mental health promotion***

The stress and anxiety of communicable disease events on employees and clients can be significant. The City of Langley will post signage and use other communications to educate or remind employees and clients to be kind and respectful to each other and direct employees to City resources to support their mental health.

**Wearing masks**

As of March 11, 2022, the PHO lifted the mask-wearing mandate and the City’s current mask-use policy is “optional” for all employees, visitors, volunteers and contractors. The City advises staff to respect the choices of others, whether they choose to wear a mask or not. For employees who are recovering from Covid-19, or another communicable disease, a mask is a useful tool to prevent the spread to others.

*This Communicable Disease Plan may be amended from time to time based on new guidance from Health Authorities and WorkSafeBC.*

Related Publications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">WorkSafeBC</a></li><li>• <a href="#">BC Centre for Disease Control</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Provincial Government of BC</a></li></ul>
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