



Williams Lake
FIRST NATION

WLFN Pandemic Policy

July 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The pandemic policies and procedures are developed as a guide for the Williams Lake First Nation employees to facilitate the continuation of essential services/functions during a pandemic. This presents an opportunity to update our COVID-19 preparedness, response, and control plans.

It outlines specific steps taken by Williams Lake First Nation to safeguard employees' health and well-being during a pandemic while ensuring WLFN's ability to maintain essential operations and continue providing essential services to our community. In addition, it provides guidance on how we intend to respond to specific operational and human resources issue in the event of a pandemic.

Our commitment is to take reasonable precautions and other specifically prescribed steps required by health and safety legislation to protect employees.

Your safety is our priority!

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus. This coronavirus is a new virus that was first recognized December 2019 in Wuhan, China. These are a large family of viruses, some of which infect animals, and others that can infect humans. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms.

Symptoms of human coronaviruses can:

- Take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus
- Be very mild or more serious
Sometimes people with COVID-19 have mild illness, but their symptoms may suddenly worsen in a few days.
- Vary from person to person

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses including the flu and common cold. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough or worsening of chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle aches
- While less common, symptoms can also include:
 - Stuffy nose
 - Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
 - Dizziness, confusion
 - Abdominal pain
 - Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes.

COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to severe. Coronaviruses 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 the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands

SAFETY MEASURES TAKEN AT WORKPLACE:

- Maintaining good ventilation.
- Encouraging employees to stay home when they are sick, or when they think they might be.
- People with symptoms (including workers, contractors, and visitors), anyone directed by public health to self-isolate and anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms are not allowed access to the workplace.
- Installing physical barriers like plexiglass between employees & clients when physical distancing is not possible, especially at the reception desk.
- Masks: At this point masks are not mandatory for our employees, however if you wish to wear a mask, please do so.
- Physical distancing: We should all keep 6 ft apart. This will always not be easy and I am sure we will get to a point where we forget because we are comfortable with each other (we must remind each other if this happens in a nice manner), but please try to keep at least 6 ft apart from each other. Be mindful of the common areas like the kitchen, boardrooms, washrooms.
- Touchpoints: There are a lot of touchpoints in the workplace that you may not even think about: photocopier, door handles, fridge, microwave, drawers, cupboards and so on. Please respect to using the photocopier and anything in the kitchen that you wash your hands immediately afterwards.
- Hand Sanitizer: Hand sanitizer is available at the front desks and throughout the workplace.
- Post signage at all locations about effective hygiene practices
- Post signage at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises, including visitors and employees with symptoms
- Supervisors to be trained on monitoring employees and the workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed

Employee showing covid-19 symptoms at workplace:

- Sick employees should report to immediate Manager, even with mild symptoms
- Sick employees should be asked to wash or sanitize their hands, provided with a mask, and isolated. Ask the employee to go straight home. Consult with BC Covid-19 self-assessment tool, or call 811 for further guidance related to testing and self-isolation
- If the employee is severely ill (e.g., difficulty breathing, chest pain), call 911
- Determine the level of exposure in your workplace
- Clean and disinfect the exposed premises.

Take action if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 infection:

In most cases, we do not need to shut down your facility. If it has been less than 7 days since the sick employee has been in the facility, close off any areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person:

- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.
- If it has been 7 days or more since the sick employee used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routinely cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch surfaces in the facility.
- Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting them.
- Always wear gloves and gowns appropriate for the chemicals being used when you are cleaning and disinfecting.
- You may need to wear additional PPE depending on the setting and disinfectant product you are using. For each product you use, consult and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Any office closures must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Employees that have been tested positive for covid-19 or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for covid-19:

- If the employee has not come into the workplace, you can require an employee to self-isolate for 14 days.
- The employee must take all necessary measures to protect their health and safety, and those of others in the workplace.
- Provide the employee with their provincial, territorial, and federal leave/pay options and ensure that they know who to call at the workplace to keep updated on their situation.
- Request the employee provide you with a fit-to-work assessment before coming back into the workplace.

EMERGENCY-CONTACT & MEDICAL INFORMATION

Employees are required to update their emergency-contact information on the Bamboo HR Platform. When providing such information, employees, especially those who have children or care for elderly relatives, should identify individuals on whom they can depend if the employees themselves become sick at work and must be isolated and quarantined.

Williams Lake First Nation is required by law to notify first-responders about employees with medical conditions that could be compromised because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

VISITORS

Visitors coming to our workplace present a large risk to the health and safety of our employees. Visitors include clients, suppliers, anybody who is not an employee. Mandatory hygiene protocols to be followed by visitors for their safety and our employees' safety –

- Anyone entering our offices must be requested to fill and sign the pre-screen questionnaire form and submit it to the Receptionist/ Office Coordinator.
- Hand sanitizer is available at our reception desk and throughout our office spaces
- A tissue box is available at the reception desk if they cough or sneeze and have the ability to use a tissue or their bended elbow and sanitize their hands immediately afterwards
- No shaking of hands, hugging, or touching
- Notice to be placed at every office about visitor guidelines

IN-PERSON HEALTH CHECKS:

If implementing in-person health checks, conduct them safely and respectfully. Employees may use social distancing barrier to complete the health checks in a way that helps maintain social distancing guidelines or partition controls, or personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the screener.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, make employee health screenings as private as possible. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of each individual's medical status and history.

TRAVEL

A requirement for employees to notify their immediate manager if they or someone with whom they reside plans to or has recently travelled to/from an area subject to a Government of Canada travel health notice to avoid non-essential travel.

Inter-Provincial Travel:

Self-insolation/quarantine requirements are decided by the destination's provincial government. The employee may well be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in the destination province, and again when they return home.

Some provinces are now mandating a 14-day self-isolation for any person returning from outside the province. If this is the case in your province, then the employee will have no choice but to self-isolate. We are responsible for the health and safety of our employees and can ask the employees to stay home should there be reasonable cause.

If you are travelling to B.C. from another province or territory within Canada you are expected to follow the same travel guidelines as everyone else in B.C. and travel safely and respectfully.

If you are travelling from B.C. to another province, please check with that province for travel restrictions or guidance in place.

- Alberta travel advice
 - Alberta 511 travel conditions
- Yukon travel restrictions
 - Yukon 511 road conditions
- Northwest Territories travel advice
 - Northwest Territories highway conditions

International Travel:

The federal government is recommending that all international travel be restricted. International flights will only be permitted to land at certain airports, and travelers arriving from international destinations will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. It is also possible that travelers will find themselves quarantined in the country they are visiting.

The federal government is requiring all travelers arriving from an international destination to self-isolate for 14 days. If the employee develops even a low-grade fever or mild cough, they should avoid close contact with other people, and call their healthcare provider or public health department.

If the employee is ill and still exhibiting symptoms, the employee needs to provide a note from a healthcare practitioner that gives them clearance to return to work, before the employee may return to their regular duties.

The Government of Canada has implemented an Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act*. This order means that everyone who is entering Canada by air, sea or land has to stay home for 14 days in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. The 14-day period begins on the day you enter Canada.

- If you have travelled and have no symptoms, you must quarantine (self-isolate).
- If you have travelled and have symptoms, you must isolate.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

A requirement that employees who have or suspect that they have symptoms of Covid-19 will seek appropriate medical treatment and follow the recommendations of their medical professional, particularly as it relates to remaining home from work, self-isolation, quarantine or other measures designed to prevent the spread of illness.

Any advice provided by the medical professional should be communicated with your immediate Manager.

MEDICAL LEAVE

Employees who are ill with symptoms of Covid-19 and unable to work will have access to paid sick leave benefits as per their time-off policy in the Human Resources Manual. If all paid sick leave entitlements are used by the employee, further sick time taken will be unpaid. Employees are reminded of the possible availability of employment insurance sickness benefits or other government benefits. Following are the Medical Leave policy as per the Human Resources Manual:

- Full-time employees earn medical leave at the rate of one (1) day for each month of employment in which the employee receives their regular pay for at least ten (10) working days. Medical leave is not earned during the probationary period and is not provided to temporary or casual employees.
- Part-time employees shall earn medical leave on a prorated entitlement consistent with their regularly scheduled regular hours of work.
- An employee shall not earn or be eligible for medical leave for any period of time in which the employee is on leave without pay, under suspension or on lay-off.
- An employee shall continue to earn medical leave while on approved certified medical leave, or other leave in which the employee receives their regular pay.
- Medical days can be used for illness or injury of the employee or their immediate family members.
- An employee has job protection that lasts up to seventeen (17) weeks of time away

REMOTE WORK

Please note the remote work policy will be administered on case-by-case basis. Employees who have been exposed, but who are not ill, may be allowed to work remotely where possible given the nature of their duties and the available technology infrastructure. Where remote work is not possible, employees are eligible to take their time-off paid or unpaid to mitigate possible liability.

Supervisor responsibilities:

- Ensure you and your employee are aware about the employee's work duties and responsibilities while working from home. Make a note of the hours you expect the employee to work during this arrangement.
- Create daily and weekly goals and deadlines.
- Maintain a weekly reporting structure.
- Check up on employee on a daily/weekly basis to see if they need help or guidance in their areas of difficulty.
- Encourage and provide recognition for the work well done.

Employee responsibilities:

- All employees will be respectful, accountable, and productive while working from home.
- Employee is expected to work regular hours.
- Employees must be available by phone and email during core hours.
- Employees will still be expected to attend for staff meetings, and other meetings deemed necessary by supervisor through Zoom or teleconference. This interaction helps keep you from becoming 'invisible'.
- Employees will be responsible for the safe and secure handling of all proprietary and other information taken off-site or accessed from the off-site location, including but not limited to electronic files saved on home computers.
- The off-site workspace will be considered an extension of the WLFN's workplace and therefore will be subject to and governed by applicable Workers' Compensation legislation and WorkSafe BC. Employees will be expected to comply with normal reporting requirements for any work-related accident or injury.
- Ensure a dedicated work-space is set up to avoid distractions
- As you would for working in the office, set a schedule and stick to it. Make a 'to do' list and check your accomplishments at the end of the day. Stick to deadlines.

- Maintain contact with the office. Establish a routine for contact with your supervisor, or co-workers. Keep your supervisor informed of your progress and any difficulties encountered. This contact includes the need for overtime to complete projects.
- Determine what interruptions are okay and what is not. Tell your friends and family what the ground rules are.
- If work cannot be performed at home, inform your supervisor immediately.

PRIVACY

The Manager's should be mindful of employee privacy issues when communicating leave of absence decisions to other employees in the workplace. Information should be limited to confirming that an employee is out of the workplace and their expected return to work date. No other information should be provided without express employee consent. It may be appropriate in some cases to seek that consent and develop a message that the employee is comfortable sharing with coworkers and that is carefully vetted by the employer to ensure compliance with their legal obligations.

DOCUMENTATION

To reduce the strain on health care providers, some provincial governments recommend that only persons experiencing serious symptoms attend hospitals or medical clinics. Some provincial governments are requesting that businesses do not ask employees for medical notes before or after sickness. As an alternative, you can request for a fit-to-work assessment/functional abilities form upon your employee's return to ensure their ability to work.

IF YOU FEEL UNSAFE AT WORK –

- Please speak with your immediate Manager and express your concerns and let us know what would make you feel safer
- Remember that preventive measures are put in place, and all safety products are available to you.
- Each employee has a duty to report any dangerous situation to their supervisor.
- The Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee will investigate. Depending on the severity of the situation, a government health and safety officer may need to investigate as well.

PRECAUTIONS ARE BETTER THAN CURE:

Everyone plays a part in making our organization safer, including employer, employees, contractors, clients, and all others who interact with our organization. We need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in our workplace. This should include activities to:

- Prevent and reduce transmission among employees,
- Maintain healthy business operations, and
- Maintain a healthy work environment.

Please do your part –

- Employees who have symptoms should notify their immediate Manager and stay home.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their immediate Manager for further direction and guidance.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or to use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. If your hands are visibly dirty, they should use soap and water over hand sanitizer. Key times for employees to clean their hands include:
 - Before and after work shifts
 - Before and after work breaks
 - After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings
 - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of their elbow. Throw used tissues into no-touch trash cans and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. Clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice physical distancing by maintaining distance (at least 6 feet) from others when possible.

Every one of us have our own opinions and feelings about the Covid-19 virus and we need to respect that and not be disrespectful to those who don't agree with us. Alternatively, this can be extremely stressful times and may cause us to snap at one another, so we need to be patient with one another as well. We need to be kind and respectful to each other.

For more information and direction regarding the pandemic policy, please contact your immediate Manager.

REFERENCES

[Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[BC Resources for Covid-19](#)

[Non-medical masks and face coverings: About](#)

[Travel Affected by COVID-19](#)

For more information, visit Canada.ca/coronavirus or contact 1-833-784-4397.