

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Guideline for Retail & Service Businesses

May 8, 2020

COVID-19 Prevention KEY POINTS



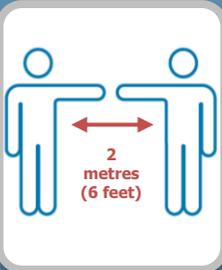
Stay HOME if you are sick

The most important measure to prevent spread of COVID-19 is to stay home if you are sick.



WASH your hands

Good personal hygiene helps reduce the risk of infection: cough/sneeze etiquette, avoid touching your face & hand washing.



Keep your DISTANCE

Prevent transmission through droplets by creating space between people, stay two metres (six feet) apart.



CLEAN surfaces often

Regular disinfection of high-touch areas reduces the risk of transmission from contaminated surfaces.

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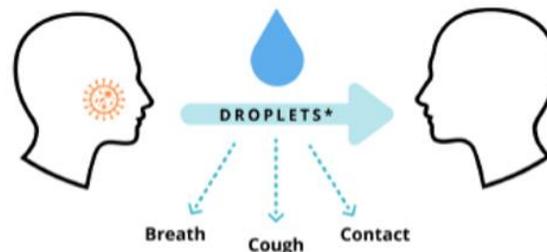
This document provides guidance for preventing transmission of COVID-19 to operators and customers of retail and service businesses. It is based upon current knowledge and it should be understood that the guidance is subject to change as new data becomes available and developments arise with this new virus; furthermore, unique situations may require some discretion in adjusting these guidelines which are meant to be supportive, not prescriptive.

WHAT is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection caused by a newly identified virus. The infection has symptoms similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold: cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms can include fatigue, muscle aches, diarrhea, headache or lost sense of smell. While most people infected with COVID-19 experience only mild illness, severe illness can occur in some people, especially in those with weaker immune systems, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions.

HOW COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is spread through liquid droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter through the eyes, nose or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed. COVID-19 is not transmitted through particles in the air and is not something that can enter the body through the skin.



Resources:

- [VIDEO: Transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus](#)

WHERE can I get more Information about COVID-19?

The province of British Columbia has created a phone service to provide non-medical information about COVID-19 which is available from 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. at 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319) or via text message at 604-630-0300.

More information on COVID-19 can also be found online:

- Vancouver Coastal Health <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>
- BC Centre for Disease Control <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Guideline for Retail and Service Businesses

WHO should read this guideline?

Owners and operators of all retail and service businesses should read this guideline. It may also be of interest to members of the public who enter these establishments. The following are some examples of retail and service businesses. The list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Clothing & Footwear
- Jewelry & Accessories
- Beauty & Cosmetics
- Automotive Sales & Repair
- Hardware
- Home Furnishings & Decor
- Toys & Games
- Garden & Floral
- Electronics & Cellular
- Athletics Equipment
- Pet Supplies
- Books & Office Supplies
- Arts & Crafts
- Eyewear & Optical
- Financial Institutions
- Rentals & Repairs

CAN retail & service establishments operate?

Yes. Unless they have been given specific direction under a Public Health Act Order, businesses in BC have not been required to close. While some businesses have modified their operations and remained open, many others voluntarily closed to protect their employees and clientele during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Information in this guideline will be presented as a series of tip sheets:

- Employee Sickness
- Personal Hygiene
- Physical Distancing
- Sanitation
- Site Management
- Staff Scheduling and Meetings
- Signage and Communications

In many cases, normal day-to-day operations for some retail and service businesses often results in close contact between the employee and client, or prolonged handling of merchandise by clients, or prolonged handling of clients' belongings by employees. These businesses may warrant additional control measures outlined in the last tip sheet:

- Handling Common-Touch Merchandise and Equipment

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HOW to use this guideline:

This guideline describes a number of potential actions for reducing the risk of transmission for retail and service businesses. Each business must make their own assessment for transmission risks such that the appropriate combination of additional measures can be implemented.

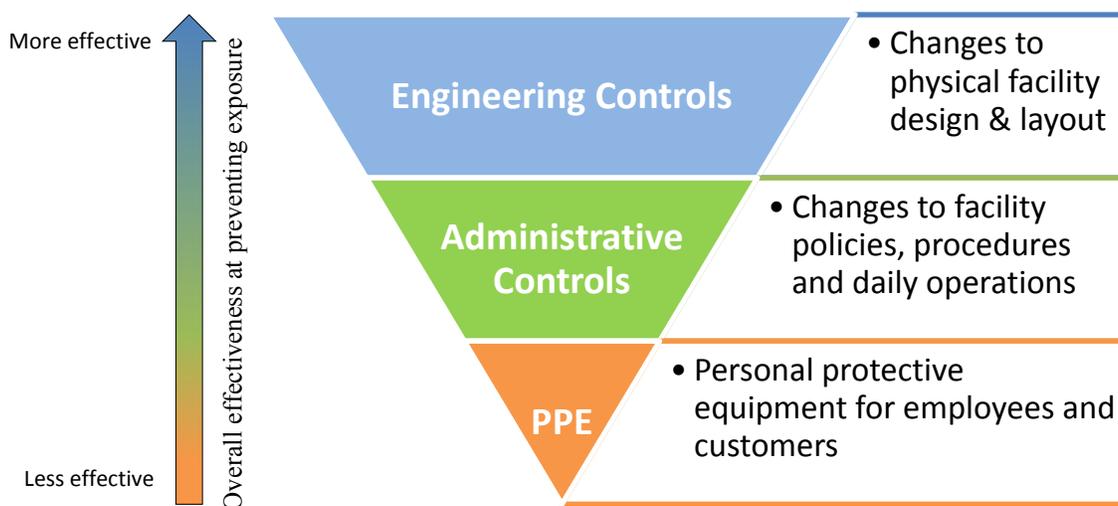
In all cases, it remains important for everyone to stay home if you are sick, to wash your hands often, to keep your distance, and to disinfect high touch surfaces often.

Prioritizing Action

It may be helpful to understand the rationale behind the recommendations in this guideline, and the relative impacts each can have on controlling the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace. Some controls will be more difficult to implement but may have a greater overall impact, while other controls will be easier to implement but may have less overall impact.

Levels of Control

In the model shown below, control methods at the top of the pyramid are generally more effective and protective than those at the bottom. Following this model normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer systems, where the risk of illness exposure and/or transmission has been substantially reduced.



Typically, engineering controls are favored over administrative and personal protective equipment (PPE) for controlling exposures. This is because most engineering controls are designed to prevent people from coming into contact with an infectious person or contaminated surface in the first place.

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Tip Sheet – Employee Sickness

Goal: To maintain a healthy workforce by ensuring employees stay home if they are ill with fever or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind.

Administrative Controls

- Tell your employees that if they are sick with any symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with cold, influenza, or COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, they must not work, they must remain at home, and they should contact their family physician, primary care provider or Health Link BC at 8-1-1.
- Thoughtfully plan and communicate your sick-leave policy to create an environment where employees feel supported in staying home when they are sick.
- Prepare operational contingency plans in cases where employees must remain home when sick (e.g. modifying systems to operate with fewer employees).
- Have employees declare they are symptom-free when signing in for the day. If employees have any symptoms, even mild symptoms they must go home.
- If while at work, an employee starts experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, ask the employee to don a mask and to leave work immediately, go straight home, and have them contact their family physician/primary care provider or 8-1-1 for further guidance.
- Ensure that objects and surfaces touched by sick employees who have gone home are disinfected before being used by others.
- Sick employees should use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool.
- Anyone with symptoms can now be assessed and receive a COVID-19 test.
- Testing is not recommended for people who do not have symptoms.
- If an employee has a COVID-19 diagnosis, the local public health department will identify any co-workers who may have been exposed to the sick employee.
- The employer and employees should be reassured that if they haven't been contacted by public health then there is no issue or concern that was identified by public health.

Resources:

- [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Poster: COVID-19 Testing for all who Need It](#)

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Tip Sheet – Personal Hygiene

GOAL: To limit spread of the virus by promoting good personal hygiene through hand washing, hand sanitization, and cough/sneeze etiquette.

Engineering Controls

- Provide a supply of hand sanitizer at entrances and posters reminding of the importance of handwashing/sanitizing following contact with common touch surfaces.
- If hand sanitization stations are limited, limit the number of entrances as well.
- Washrooms must have liquid soap, paper towels and warm running water at all times.
- Place boxes of tissues in regular locations along with posters reminding people to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow to reduce spread of respiratory droplets and to always wash their hand afterwards.

Administrative Controls

- Train employees about the virus so they know how to minimize its spread.
- Consider providing electronic COVID-19 resources to all employees.
- Communicate information in multiple languages.
- Team members should be encouraged and reminded to practice good hygiene throughout the workday.
- Employees must avoid touching their face without first cleaning their hands.
- Replace physical greetings such as handshakes and hugs with non-contact greetings such as waves and smiles.
- There should be no sharing of cigarettes or vaping equipment

Personal Protective Equipment

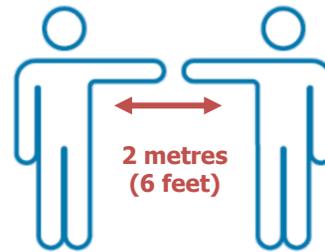
- While the use of masks for prevention of COVID-19 among people without symptoms in non-healthcare settings is generally not recommended by Vancouver Coastal Health, some customers may prefer to wear masks and this may help to prevent transmission from the person wearing the mask.

Resources:

- [Video: Hand Washing](#)
- [Video: Cough & sneeze etiquette](#)
- [Health Canada guidance on hand sanitizers](#)

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Tip Sheet – Physical Distancing

Goal: To modify the physical environment and increase space between people to eliminate transmission of the virus through respiratory droplets.

Engineering Controls

- Increase empty floor space by removing unnecessary materials, equipment, and merchandise displays, especially in hallways, high traffic areas, and other small spaces.
- Mark 2 metre (6 foot) increments on floors where crowds normally form (e.g. line-up areas inside and outside the store, payment areas etc.).
- Where possible, employees should work more than 2 metres (6 feet) apart.
- Use markers or physical barriers to delineate work areas.
- Control foot traffic patterns on the retail floor by using cones, tape or floor arrows.
- Provide lunchroom table dividers to physically separate diners.

Administrative Controls

- Monitor the number of customers and staff in the store.
- Once the maximum number of persons is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- A designated employee may be required to facilitate this.
- Smaller stores may be able to communicate this information through additional signage.
- Make announcements at regular intervals over the store speaker reminding customers to stay two metres apart.



Calculating and maintaining the maximum number of people in a store:

Stores should maintain at least 5 m² of unencumbered retail floor space per person. For example:

- A store with 200 m² of retail floor space has 70 m² of retail displays, this store has 130m² of unencumbered floor space for customers (200 m² - 70 m² = 130 m²).
- The maximum number of people allowed in the store to support physical distancing would be: 130 m² ÷ (5 m² per person) = 26 people.

Resources:

- Video: [Why do we need to socially distance?](#)

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Tip Sheet – Sanitation

Goal: Increase cleaning and disinfection of common high touch points to prevent COVID-19 from spreading through contaminated surfaces.

Administrative Controls

- Make an inventory of all high-touch surfaces, for example: communal door handles, light switches, touch screens, sales registers, counters, break room appliances, shopping cart handles and baskets, railings, loading bay doors, ladders, pallet jacks, trollies, faucets, and merchandise.
- Create a checklist of all high-touch surfaces and determine the frequency of cleaning and disinfection based on your organization's needs.
- Depending on the surface/object, more frequent cleaning may be warranted.
- Choose appropriate methods to disinfect all surfaces on the checklist.
- Post the daily disinfection schedule in a high-visibility area.
- Assign team members with specific disinfection responsibilities, and have them sign the schedule after completing each disinfection cycle. Very large stores may need to be divided into smaller areas to ensure nothing gets missed.
- Make sure any person required to clean has received the appropriate training.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Ensure employees responsible for cleaning are equipped with any required personal protective equipment which will depend on the cleaning process and the chemicals being used.

HOW to select and use a disinfectant

- Disinfectants must have a DIN (drug identification number).
- Always follow the instructions on the label.
- Make sure the appropriate contact time is met (i.e. surfaces must remain wet with disinfectant for the correct length of time in order to destroy any contamination).
- Surfaces that are dirty must be cleaned with soap and water first, before disinfecting.

Resources:

- [Health Canada approved disinfectants for COVID-19](#)
- [BCCDC Guideline for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

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TIP Sheet – Site Management

Goal: To modify normal business operations to minimize the potential for COVID-19 to spread in the workplace.

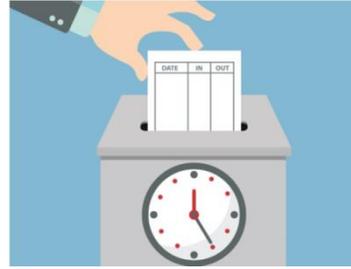
Engineering Controls

- Prop doors open so people can pass through without touching handles.
- Increase ventilation whenever possible by opening windows, doors, and increasing the fresh air intake on air handling units.
- Eliminate communal storage areas for employees' personal belongings, and instead provide separate sealable bins or lockers.
- Install protective shields at customer service and point of sale areas.
- In break rooms, have team members use their own dishes and utensils, and store them in personal containers rather than communal areas.
- Provide single-use (preferably compostable) dishes/utensils in employee dining areas.
- Sales registers should be at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart.

Administrative Controls

- Offer delivery or curbside pickup services as an alternative to shopping in-person.
- Allow only one person at the check-out at a time.
- Encourage use of pre-payment using online services.
- Encourage use of touch-free payment.
- Ask clientele whether they need a receipt for every transaction and if one is needed, provide the receipt directly without having a team member touch it.
- When cash is the only option, team members handling cash should wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after cash transactions.
- Discourage carpooling to/from the worksite for employees.

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TIP Sheet – Staff Scheduling & Meetings

Goal: To adjust schedules, rotations and shift activities to limit contact between team members.

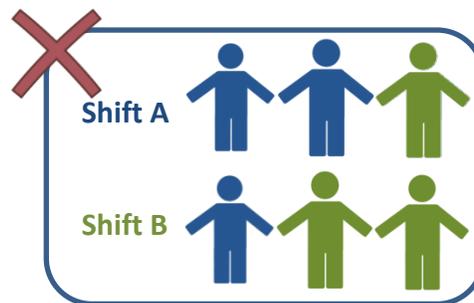
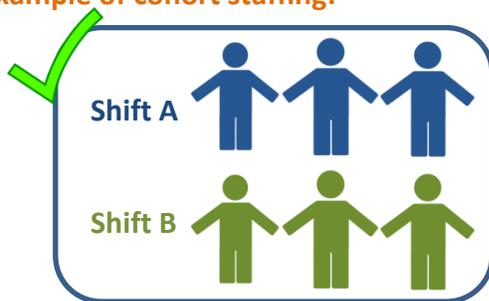
Engineering Controls

- Designate additional rooms or areas for breaks, and encourage use of outdoor spaces.
- Use large rooms, outdoor spaces, or virtual options for team meetings.
- Clearly demarcate employee-only areas and do not allow clients to enter these spaces.

Administrative Controls

- Team members who can work from home should do so.
- When multiple team members are onsite at any given time, keep individuals in the same location as much as possible.
- Consider implementing ‘cohort staffing’ – this means forming small groups of team members who will consistently work together without crossover.

Example of cohort staffing:



- Allow team members to group themselves so that they feel as comfortable as possible.
- If your company owns multiple retail outlets, identify team members who work at different outlets and find a way to eliminate or reduce travel between sites.
- Have team members or a manager keep daily records of the people who worked together and retain these records for at least two months.
- Stagger breaks for individuals or cohorts, and maintain a predictable break schedule.
- Staff training should be done in small groups with social distancing, or online.

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Tip Sheet – Signage & Communications

GOAL: To communicate important information and provide instructions in a way that is easily understood by everyone.

Engineering Controls

- Place signs on front doors to tell anyone entering not to enter if they are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms potentially related to COVID-19.
- Post physical distancing signs in common areas, and in line of sight to workstations.
- Place posters near to all bathroom and kitchen sinks, reminding users of good hand washing practice.

Administrative Controls

- Maintain up-to-date and consistent messaging on websites, in social media, emails, press releases, and during conversations with customers to ensure all details are aligned, timely and accurate.
- Communicate information in multiple languages.
- Wherever possible, use diagrams and pictures to communicate information.
- Ensure the font size on signage is large enough for everyone to read from a distance (i.e. if the person was standing 2 metres (6 feet) away from the sign).
- In wet areas and outdoors, put posters in plastic sleeves to protect them from water damage.
- Any important signage should be placed in conspicuous areas, and away from other posted information so it is clearly visible and distinguishable (i.e. avoid posting signs next to product advertisements, coupon boards etc.).
- Encourage team members to provide regular feedback on any issues with COVID-19 prevention measures. Consider providing a means for employees to do this anonymously.

Resources:

- Poster: [Physical Distancing](#)
- Poster: [Do Not Enter when Sick](#)
- Poster: [Hand Washing Poster](#)

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Tip Sheet – Handling common-touch merchandise and equipment

Goal: To provide supplemental guidance for businesses providing rentals of tools, equipment and/or apparel, offering repair services, and those where clients would typically try on or sample merchandise prior to purchase (e.g. clothing, footwear, eyewear, accessories, jewelry).

Engineering Controls

- Sample items (e.g. cosmetics, beauty products) must be removed from the sales floor.
- If possible, keep fewer of the same pieces of merchandise on the sales floor.
- Organize merchandise displays so clients can easily pick-up the item they want without having to touch many others (e.g. increased spacing between merchandise, avoiding bulk bin items, de-clutter displays etc.).
- Consider making disinfection wipes available for use by customers trying on eyewear, headphones and similar items.
- Consider providing sanitizing wipes in the area where items are rented and returned, so clients can wipe down items themselves.

Administrative Controls

- Post signs requesting customers only touch items they intend to buy.
- Customers should be encouraged to clean their hands prior to trying on items.
- If goods have to be returned, ensure returns are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected or held for 72 hours before being returned to store shelves.
- Employees should wash their hands after touching anything that has been in the client's possession and before helping the next client.
- For rental equipment, extend times between rentals to allow for thorough cleaning and disinfection.
- When renting bicycles, clients should be encouraged to bring their own helmets.