



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



HOW YOU CAN SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Take care of others by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Stay at Home and Physically Distance

Stay at home whenever you can. Maintain 2 meters distance from those outside of your household.

COVID-19: Infection and Prevention Control Guidance on Code White Response

July 7, 2020

Introduction

Code White refers to a trained team response to a disturbance that is a behavioural emergency involving clients in health-care settings¹. This document provides interim guidance to health-care personnel (HCP) regarding infection prevention and control (IPC) measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19 during a Code White response. This guidance is based upon current knowledge and is subject to change.

Code White Preparedness During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Administrative Responsibilities

- To prevent virus transmission in health-care settings, procedures and protocols referred to as controls need to be applied. While personal protective equipment (PPE) is the most visible control used to prevent transmission, it must be used in conjunction with other lines of defense against virus transmission (such as appropriate facilities for hand hygiene).
- All responders should be trained in all standard Code White procedures, as well as all additional Code White procedures applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Workers who are assigned to support and respond to Code White incidents must have completed all required violence prevention education and training and must be properly trained on use of required PPE.
- It is especially important that all staff are aware of safety concerns related to putting on (donning), taking off (doffing), and disposing of PPE. BCCDC guidance on donning and doffing PPE can be found on the [BCCDC website](https://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/infection-control/personal-protective-equipment).
- Post signage for routine droplet and contact precautions outside the room/space of clients who are suspected of having or have been diagnosed with COVID-19: <https://www.picnet.ca/resources/posters/precaution-signs/>
- Post signage on how to extend the use of PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the facility: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/infection-control/personal-protective-equipment>
- Post signs at appropriate locations with instructions on how to put on (don) and take off (doff) PPE: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/infection-control/personal-protective-equipment>

¹ WorkSafe BC Guidelines: Code White Response. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/guidelines-code-white-response>



- Post signs at appropriate locations on how to wear a surgical mask: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf
- Post instructions at appropriate locations on how to clean and disinfect eye and facial protection: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf

PPE Considerations

- Where a patient has or is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and an intervention requires staff to be within 2 metres of the patient, contact droplet precautions should be undertaken. Contact and droplet precautions require a surgical or procedure mask, eye protection, a gown and gloves.
- Staff must have completed all required violence prevention education and training and must be properly trained on use of required PPE.
- Certain areas within a site may not typically have a dedicated stock of PPE (e.g., security), or stock may be significantly depleted during the COVID-19 pandemic. If PPE is not available to a responder, that responder will be unable to be hands on (if necessary) during the response.
- Sites should determine a process for ensuring that all responders have PPE available (for grab and go) prior to responding to a Code White call.

Process Recommendations

Conduct a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) on Arrival

- A PCRA is an assessment tool to help determine whether an individual is at risk of being exposed to a potential hazard. For every Code White response, responders should carry out a point of care risk assessment.
- Risk assessments should include checking for any signage indicating an elevated level of precaution in the area.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, PCRA should also include the following question: **Is it likely that the Code White response will involve close contact (within two metre) with a client with symptoms of COVID-19?**
 - If yes, contact droplet precautions should be undertaken.

Supporting the PCRA

- The unit calling the Code White can support responders' PCRA through prompt and appropriate communication.
- A staff member should be designated to inform the responders as they arrive as to any violence risks and whether the situation indicates probable physical intervention, and if there are infection prevention and control considerations.

Select Appropriate PPE

- PPE, where needed, must be correctly selected and used in a safe manner.
- Responders must be aware of safety concerns related to putting on (donning), taking off (doffing), and disposing of PPE.
- BCCDC guidance on how to put on (don) and take off (doff) PPE, and how to extend the use of PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found on the [BCCDC Website](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf).
- Information on how to wear a surgical mask: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf
- Information on how to wear, clean, and disinfect eye and facial protection: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf



- Information on respiratory protection for health-care workers caring for potential or confirmed COVID-19 Patients: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/AGMPs_requiring_N95.pdf

Situation	Responding to a Code White involving a patient/client without symptoms of COVID-19	Responding to a Code white involving a patient/client who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
PPE Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No PPE beyond that used routinely prior to COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eye protection Surgical or procedure mask Disposable Gown Gloves

Damaged or Compromised PPE

- If a responder's PPE is damaged or compromised, they should:
 - Ensure that the other members of the response team are aware of what is happening;
 - Calmly withdraw themselves from the response as soon as they can do so safely;
 - Doff and dispose of PPE appropriately.

Escalating the Code White Response

- If the situation is not manageable given the intervention resources present, for example, difficult Code or insufficient responders, a timely decision should be made to seek additional support with the Code White, such as calling a second Code White or calling the police.
- As per *Ethical analysis and recommendations arising from the [COVID-19 pandemic: Intervening when patients or residents pose a risk of harm of COVID-19 transmission to others](#)*, it is reasonable to consider an escalating degree of intervention when individuals engage in activities and/or behaviours that put others at intolerable risk of harm, including potential exposure to COVID-19.
- When considering interventions, relevant legislative authority must be considered.

Ensure Appropriate Follow-Up

- All responders must document their participation in the Code White through the appropriate standardized site procedure, for example, all responders sign the signatory sheet in the patient chart. This is important because if later it is determined that there was an exposure to COVID-19, documentation will support exposure tracking.
- Sites should ensure that all Code White responders participate in a post-event debrief. Beyond standard debrief processes, it is asked that additional conversation is facilitated about any concerns related to COVID-19 exposure.
- For provincially standardized exposure criteria to assess risk for healthcare workers exposed to COVID-19 patients while at work please see: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/testing-and-case-management-for-healthcare-workers>

All exposures must be reported to the Workplace Health and Safety Team appropriate for the site in question. The Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre (1-866-922-9464) should be contacted immediately, and any exposed staff should immediately take the necessary steps to decrease further exposure to themselves and their colleagues.



Resources:

Orders, Notices and Guidance from BC's Public Health Officer:

The COVID-19 pandemic presents several significant clinical, ethical, and operational issues regarding the safety of health-care personnel. To limit the spread of COVID-19, the British Columbia Provincial Health Officer of and Public Health Agency of Canada have issued infection prevention and control guidance for novel coronavirus.

For further information, visit the websites below:

- The Provincial *COVID-19 Ethical Decision-Making Framework* can be found online at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/ethics_framework_for_covid_march_28_2020.pdf
- An ethical analysis of health care workers' duty to provide care during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found online at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/duty_to_care_during_covid_march_28_2020.pdf
- The Provincial *Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Allocation Framework* can be found online at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/infection-control/personal-protective-equipment>

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, please refer to the [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) website](#).

Please refer to the [WorkSafe BC website](#) for the WorkSafe BC *Guideline: Code White Response*.

Please refer to the [Health Employers Association of BC website](#), or your employer's Learning Management System for the Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum (PVPC) modules.

Supplemental infection prevention and control guidance and resource materials within the scope of this policy are available online at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care>

General information about COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). In the context of a global COVID-19 pandemic, B.C. has implemented a number of public health measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

How is COVID-19 spread?

- COVID-19 is spread through large liquid droplets when a person infected with COVID-19 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 does not transmit through particles in the air and is not something that can come in through the skin.

What are symptoms?

- People who are ill with COVID-19 infection have reported mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath.
- While COVID-19 can cause serious illness, many people have only mild symptoms.



- COVID-19 infection can be very serious for people with health conditions, such as diabetes, heart issues or breathing troubles.

Who needs to self-isolate?

- People who are **contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case**, meaning they have been or could have been exposed to the virus, but do not have symptoms, are required to self-isolate.
- Self-isolation means staying home and avoiding situations where you could come in contact with others. You may have been exposed to the virus and are at risk for developing COVID-19 and passing it on to others.
- You may NOT self-isolate in a place where you will be in contact with vulnerable people, such as seniors and individuals with underlying health conditions.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days until symptoms resolve. A **Self-Assessment Tool** has also been developed to assess your symptoms: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>.
- As of March 25, 2020, all persons arriving in Canada must self-isolate (quarantine) and monitor for symptoms for 14 days under the *Quarantine Act*.

For more information about self-isolation for COVID-19, please see: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation>

General Precautions

- Stay at home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.
- Practice diligent hand hygiene at all times.
 - Wash your hands regularly with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol content.
 - Antibacterial soap is NOT required for COVID-19.
- Practice cough etiquette. Cough into your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you sneeze. Immediately dispose of all used tissues in an appropriate waste bin and wash your hands right away.
- Maintain a physical distance of two metres from others wherever possible: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/physical-distancing>
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices, joints or bongs.
- Post signs to encourage diligent hand hygiene: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/signage-posters>
- Put up signage promoting physical distancing: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_PhysicalDistancingPoster.pdf

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