



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
POLICY COMMUNIQUÉ

COMMUNIQUÉ

TO: Health Authority CEOs

TRANSMITTAL DATE: September 1, 2021

COMMUNIQUÉ 2020-01
NUMBER:

CLIFF NUMBER: 1183853

SUBJECT: Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19.

DETAILS: This document replaces the May 19, 2020 version of
Communique 2020-01.

This document outlines updated Ministry of Health
requirements for preventing and controlling COVID-19
in health authorities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately.

MINISTRY CONTACT: Brian Sagar, Senior Director, Communicable Disease,
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Stephen Brown
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Ministry of Health

Ministry of Health Policy

Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19

Policy Objective and Scope

- This policy protects patients, clients, clinicians, health care workers (clinical and non-clinical) and the public by outlining provincial expectations for the implementation of infection prevention and control (IPC) practices to prevent and control COVID-19 in all health care facilities, programs and services, as well as community physician offices and outpatient clinics.

Definitions

- **Shall:** A mandatory requirement based on a BC Ministry of Health directive.
- **Should:** A recommended best practice for implementation at the discretion of health care organizations and facilities.
- **Non-clinical staff:** All staff that are not providing clinical care including, but not limited to, administrative and office staff, facilities staff, contracted staff and volunteers.

Policy

Acute Care

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Acute Care Settings**, as published by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC):
http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidance_AcuteCare.pdf

Acute Care - Family and Visitors

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **Ministry of Health – Overview of Visitors in Care - Visitation guidance for Acute Care**, as published by the BCCDC:
http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_VisitorsAcuteCare.pdf

BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS)

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **Infection Prevention and Control for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): Interim Guidance for British Columbia Emergency Health Services**, as published by the BCCDC:
http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_IPC_Interim_Guidance_%20BCEHS.pdf.

Community-Based Health Care Clinics

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **COVID-19: Infection and Prevention Control Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings**, as published by the BCCDC:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf

Home and Community Health Care

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **COVID-19: Infection and Prevention Control Guidance for Home and Community Health Care Settings**, as published by the BCCDC:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_HomeCommunityCareIPCGuidance.pdf

Long-Term Care & Seniors' Assisted Living

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **COVID-19: Infection and Prevention Control Guidance for Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living Settings**, as published by the BCCDC: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19_LongTermCareAssistedLiving.pdf

Long-Term Care & Seniors' Assisted Living – Family and Visitors

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the **Ministry of Health - Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living - visitation requirements for Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living**, as published by the BCCDC:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Visitors_Long-Term_Care_Seniors_Assisted_Living.pdf

Outbreak Management Protocols

- Health care organizations and facilities with the scope of this policy shall implement the **COVID-19: Outbreak Management Protocols for Acute Care, Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living Settings**, as published by the BCCDC:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_Provincial_Outbreak_Management_Protocol_LTC.pdf

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Mask Use

- Please see the Ministry of Health *Policy Communique* for guidance on **Mask Use in Health Care Facilities** During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/>

[Mask Use Health Care Facilities.pdf](#)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Respirator Fit Testing

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall perform fit tests as required by BC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Measures for Providing Respirators

- Health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the following:
 - provide access to additional PPE, such as respirators, in circumstances where a health care worker determines there is elevated risk of COVID-19 transmission through patient interaction based on a Point of Care Risk Assessment:
http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_PointOfCareRiskAssessTool.pdf
 - work collaboratively to actively manage inventories of respirators. This includes implementing a formal approval process for respirator distribution.
 - implement appropriate, alternative respirators where required. This includes adopting alternative respirators, reusable respirators, and Powered Air-Purifying Respirators (PAPRs). Alternative products may require additional training and education for health care workers.
 - permit limited, extended use of respirators whereby a single respirator can be worn for repeated, close contact encounters with multiple patients without removing the respirator.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Additional Measures

- Effective immediately, health care organizations and facilities within the scope of this policy shall implement the following additional measures:
 - must work collaboratively with Provincial Health Services Authority Supply Chain to actively manage inventories of PPE to ensure all areas have adequate and appropriate PPE supplies.
 - must continue to actively oversee and manage PPE supplies. This includes implementing a formal, centralized approval process for PPE distribution.
 - must designate a central, managed location within each facility from which PPE supplies shall be stored for distribution to approved departments.
 - must not order excessive amounts of PPE from the Provincial Health Services Authority Supply Chain as a response to COVID-19.