

Managing Inhalation Exposures to Unregulated Substances: Point of Care Risk Assessment Tool

Last update: February 2025

Follow these steps to assess and reduce exposure to unregulated substances if you need to enter a space where someone may have been smoking.

First, determine if you need to enter the space where someone may have been smoking.

You need to enter the space if:

- There is a risk of fire
- There is another patient in the room
- There is a medical emergency (e.g., the person is unresponsive)



What to do next:

- Perform a Point of Care Risk Assessment.
- Put on PPE as needed.
- Follow your workplace's room entry procedures.
- If possible, move any patients to a space where the air is cleaner.
- Follow your workplace's guidelines for moving patients.
- Spend as little time as possible in the space.
- Improve ventilation or filtration (e.g., by turning on air cleaners, activating HVAC, or opening windows).
- If needed, follow overdose response protocols.
- Follow cleaning protocols.

You do not need to enter the space if:

- The person smoking does not need medical attention
- There are no other people in the same space
- There is no other reason to enter



What to do next:

If you do not need to enter the space immediately, determine when it is safe to enter:

- Determine the amount of ventilation and time needed to clear the space of smoke. Check with your building's HVAC or facilities team.
- If you cannot determine the time needed, wait about 70 minutes before entering the space.
- Enter the space and follow cleaning protocol.

For more information:

- WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line for health and safety assistance: 1-888-621-7233
- Contact harm.reduction@bccdc.ca for more information on this guidance.