



COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace Policy

1. POLICY INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Information provided by federal and provincial health and safety authorities guided the development of the *COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace Policy* (hereafter the COVID-19 Safety Policy) and includes federal, provincial and WorkSafe BC recommendations for employers.
- 1.2. As the global health crisis situation evolves, amendments will be made to reflect the changing environment and any new recommendations provided by federal, provincial health and safety authorities.
- 1.3. All employees of Cowichan Tribes have a responsibility to work in compliance of safe work practices as per the [Human Resources Policy](#):
Section 5.33 "Every employee must protect [their] own health by working in compliance with the law and safe working practice and procedures established by the employer."

2. POLICY DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. In the COVID-19 Safety Policy:
 - Chief and Council refers to the thirteen duly elected members that make up Chief and Council.
 - Directors and/or Managers refers to the employees of Cowichan Tribes who are formally assigned to manage a department and/or program.
 - Employees refers to all persons employed by Cowichan Tribes.
 - Employer refers to Cowichan Tribes.
 - Front-line worker refers to employees who are delivering services in community members' homes or interacting directly with the public.
 - Household refers to individuals who live in one house.
 - Immediate supervisor refers to employees who have designated responsibility for directly managing and overseeing the work of other employees.
 - Occupancy limit refers to the maximum number of persons allowed in a room. Signage outside and inside the room will indicate the occupancy limit, which is determined by Directors and/or Managers in consultation with the COVID-19 Project Manager, taking into consideration multiple factors including but not limited to how much space is available to accommodate the physical distance of two (2) metres/ six (6) feet between each person.
 - Person refers to both employees of Cowichan Tribes and non-employees.
 - Self-isolation refers to staying home, not having visitors in your home, avoiding contact with others in your home, and keeping a physical distance. Self-isolation also includes hygiene and cleaning protocols such as wearing a mask and/or face shield when around others, washing your hands regularly, and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces.
 - Social distancing or physical distancing refers to maintaining two (2) metres/ six (6) feet distance between persons.
 - Work from Home Agreement refers to the written agreement between Cowichan Tribes and an employee, which is prepared by the immediate supervisor, Director and/or Manager in consultation with the Human Resources department and signed by the employee.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVE

- 3.1. The objective of the COVID-19 Safety Policy is to ensure the safe operations and delivery of services, and to reduce the risk of transmission when employees are in the office or working outside the office on behalf of Cowichan Tribes.

4. POLICY APPLICATION

- 4.1. The COVID-19 Safety Policy applies to all employees of Cowichan Tribes, as well as all persons conducting business with Cowichan Tribes including the duly elected members of Chief and Council.

5. POLICY COMPLIANCE

- 5.1. All employees are responsible for ensuring the application and practice of the COVID-19 Safety Policy.
- 5.2. Where an employee has a question about the COVID-19 Safety Policy, they must consult with their immediate supervisor, the Director and/or Manager, or the Human Resources department.
- 5.3. Employees who fail to comply with the COVID-19 Safety Policy will be subject to disciplinary action as set out in Section 14 of the [Human Resources Policy](#).
- 5.4. Persons conducting business with Cowichan Tribes who fail to comply with the COVID-19 Safety Policy will be banned from accessing Cowichan Tribes' buildings.

6. OBLIGATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME

- 6.1. Employees who have been assigned to work from home are obligated to comply with their Work from Home Agreement, and to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in an engaged and accessible manner similar to when working in an office.
- 6.2. Employees working from home are expected to work and account for all hours, as per their employment contract and Work from Home Agreement.
- 6.3. It is mandatory for all employees who have been assigned to work from home to check in with their immediate supervisor by phone and/or email before or at the start of their scheduled shift. Where an employee fails to check in with their immediate supervisor, they will receive leave without pay.
- 6.4. Employees working from home are expected to be available to complete tasks as directed by their immediate supervisor and/or the Director and/or Manager. Where an employee fails to respond to a request, they will receive leave without pay on the day the request was received.
- 6.5. Employees working from home are expected to regularly check their Cowichan Tribes Groupwise e-mail, and to respond to any work-related emails received.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNAGE

- 7.1. Communication regarding information related to COVID-19 is a delegated responsibility of the General Manager or staff delegated by the General Manager. To eliminate confusing or inaccurate information, employees are to refrain from sending COVID-19-related news or information to staff, unless they have the delegated responsibility.
- 7.2. Signage outside and inside Cowichan Tribes buildings must be maintained and followed as instructed.

8. OFFICE PROCEDURES

Scheduling

- 8.1. Employees who must work in a Cowichan Tribes office will be provided their schedule from their immediate supervisor, so as to limit the number of employees present at one time and ensure the max occupancy of the office is obeyed.
- 8.2. Employees are responsible for following the schedule provided to them by their immediate supervisor.
- 8.3. Employees must not go to the office when not scheduled, unless they have been instructed to or given approval by their immediate supervisor and/or the Director and/or Manager.

Front-Desk Administration

- 8.4. Before any person enters a Cowichan Tribes building, they must review the pre-screening questions that are posted outside. It is mandatory to respect all signage posted.
- 8.5. All persons entering a Cowichan Tribes building must do so one at a time and/or at the direction of the designated front-desk employee.
- 8.6. Every department has an employee stationed at the entrance, who will be responsible for logging all persons who enter and exit the building. They will also be responsible for asking screening questions for all persons who enter the building, and ensuring every person sanitizes their hands upon entrance.
- 8.7. All persons entering the building must follow the directions of the designated front-desk employee.
- 8.8. Shared/communal sign-in and sign-out sheets are not allowed. All persons entering a building must provide the front-desk employee with their first and last name.
- 8.9. Every person who enters a Cowichan Tribes building must complete the Screening Protocol (Appendix A) and answer all questions with honesty.
- 8.10. Every person who enters a Cowichan Tribes building must use the hand-sanitizer at the entrance. Anyone who refuses to sanitize their hands will not be permitted into the building.

Inter-departmental Movement

- 8.11. To further limit the risk of transmission, employees are not to enter other department's offices. All inter-departmental operational procedures and communications will continue through digital means including but not limited to email, phone, video or teleconference.

9. SHARED SPACES

- 9.1. All shared spaces in Cowichan Tribes' building are restricted, including shared offices, lobbies, kitchens, break rooms and meeting rooms.
- 9.2. Employees must obey restrictions and follow department-specific hygiene and cleaning protocols when using restricted spaces and equipment and/or supplies including but not limited to fridges, microwaves, kettles and coffee machines.
- 9.3. Shared food and beverages, and the use of communal kitchen dishes and utensils is prohibited.
- 9.4. All meetings will be held primarily through video or teleconference. Where the use of a meeting room is necessary, employees must request the approval from their immediate supervisor and the Director and/or Manager.
- 9.5. In cases where a meeting is held in person, the following conditions must be met:
 - 9.5.1. The maximum number of persons in the room is limited to that room's occupancy limit;
 - 9.5.2. All person must maintain two (2) metres/six (6) feet distance from one another;
 - 9.5.3. Hands must be washed and/or sanitized before entering the meeting room;
 - 9.5.4. Upon conclusion of the meeting, employees must disinfect the room, including the chairs, table, door handle, light switches and any equipment used.
- 9.6. The number of employees in the office will be limited to occupancy limits. The following measures may be taken, at the discretion of each department's Director and/or Manager and/or employee's immediate supervisors;
 - 9.6.1. Offices that were previously shared will be limited to one (1) employee per office at a time;
 - 9.6.2. Where there is more than one (1) employee in an office, there must be minimum two (2) metres/six (6) feet distance between them at all times;
 - 9.6.3. Where it is not possible to maintain two (2) metres/six (6) feet physical distance, plexiglass or partitions may be installed; or
 - 9.6.4. Where it is not possible to maintain two (2) metres/six (6) feet physical distance, or install plexiglass or partitions, employees will be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which includes a mask and/or face shield.

9.7. Employees who drive a personal vehicle or company owned/leased/rented vehicle for work-related purposes, will be restricted to one (1) employee per vehicle.

9.7.1. Where it is not possible to maintain two (2) metres/six (6) feet physical distance, or install plexiglass or partitions in the vehicle, employees will be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which includes a mask and/or face shield.

9.8. Employees must not share car rides with anyone who is not living in the same household.

10. CLEANING AND HYGIENE PROTOCOL

10.1. To meet and maintain the high level of cleaning/disinfecting now required in offices, employees may be assigned cleaning and/or disinfecting tasks as part of their job duties by their immediate supervisor, or the Director and/or Manager.

10.2. All employees are responsible for washing their hands diligently and effectively:

10.2.1. When they enter a Cowichan Tribes office and/or vehicle;

10.2.2. Before and after going on a break;

10.2.3. After using the washroom;

10.2.4. After coughing or sneezing, or when hands are visibly dirty;

10.2.5. Before and after handling personal protective equipment;

10.2.6. Regularly throughout the day.

10.3. Employees must not share any office supplies such as pens, pencils, and staplers.

10.4. Employees are responsible for sanitizing their desks, computers and any other office equipment that they come into contact with at the end of their scheduled shift.

10.5. Employees are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces such as counters, doorknobs, and light switches regularly throughout the day.

10.6. Shared equipment, tools and machinery must be disinfected after one (1) use (i.e. after an employee uses it, it must be disinfected before another employee uses it). This includes printers, scanners, photocopiers, and fax machines.

10.7. Employees must maintain inter-departmental operations and procedures through digital means (email, video or teleconference), so as to reduce the risk of transmission through the passing of hard copy papers.

11. EMPLOYEES' HEALTH

11.1. Any employee who has had symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate at home. Symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and new muscle aches or headache.

11.2. Any employee who is under the direction of the health care professional to self-isolate must follow those instructions.

11.3. Any employee who has travelled outside of Canada or who is a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.

11.4. Employees have a duty to report to their immediate supervisor when they are ill, and/or have been instructed by a health care professional to self-isolate, and/or have travelled outside of Canada and/or have not maintained social distancing/physical distancing outside of their home.

11.5. Employees must report any illness that affects their ability to engage in work-related matters to their immediate supervisor as per section 5.42 of the [Human Resources Policy](#) which states: "An employee who expects to be late or absent from work must notify their supervisor or designated contact person no later than 8:30am (or the start of their scheduled shift) on the day of lateness or absence...".

11.6. If an employee begins to feel ill while at work and/or at a Cowichan Tribes office, they must:

- 11.6.1. Immediately report to their immediate supervisor and first aid designate, even with mild symptoms;
- 11.6.2. Be asked to wash or sanitize their hands, be provided with a mask and be sent home;
- 11.6.3. Once the employee is home, they must monitor their symptoms and consult the [BC COVID-19 Assessment Tool](#) (available online) or call 811 or Island Health at 1-844-901-8442 for further guidance;
- 11.6.4. If an employee becomes severely ill while at work (i.e. difficulty breathing, chest pain), call 911;
- 11.6.5. All surfaces the sick employee came into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected;
- 11.7. Where an employee is able to continue working from home while in self-isolation, they will receive their regular wages as per their employment contract and Work from Home Agreement.
- 11.8. Where an employee is unable to perform their job duties and responsibilities as a result of sickness/illness, they may utilize their sick leave with pay as per the [Human Resources Policy](#).
- 11.9. The employer reserves the right to require an employee returning from sick leave to provide a medical note and/or COVID-19 clearance test.

12. EXTERNAL EMPLOYMENT

- 12.1. All employees must submit a request for approval for external employment to the Human Resources department, as per the [Human Resources Policy](#):
Section 16.01 "All employees must submit a written request for permission two (2) weeks in advance of commencing any outside employment to the Human Resources [department]..."
- 12.2. To ensure the health and safety of its employees, the employer reserves the right to deny external employment where health and safety may be compromised.

13. SOCIAL-DISTANCING

- 13.1. Employees will practice social distancing, also known as physical distancing, which means maintaining two (2) metres/six (6) feet apart from anyone who does not live in the same household.
- 13.2. Employees will not have any visitors in the workplace (i.e. non-employees visit the office).