

Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 Policy: Employees Attending Gatherings

Cowichan Tribes is committed to maintaining the health and safety of our employees and community during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have taken a number of steps to ensure our workplace and community is protected and our policies and procedures are in congruence with Provincial health and safety regulations and WorkSafe BC.

The Government of BC has issued guidelines on safe gathering and events during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Funerals, weddings, seasonal and cultural celebrations**, and such gatherings are included within these provisions. It is strongly encouraged that employees familiarize themselves and stay up to date with the safe gathering guidelines and act in accordance.

Access provincial orders, notices and guidelines on gathering and events [here](#).

Our commitments to the safety and wellness of our employees and community are further demonstrated in the following bylaw and agreement:

- [Cowichan Tribes Community Protection Bylaw](#)
- [The Joint COVID-19 Commitment Letter with Big House and Church Leaders](#)

Employee's Attending Gatherings

Events such as funerals, weddings, birthdays, seasonal and cultural celebrations are essential aspects of our lives that support our social well being and cultural traditions and practices. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we must be extra careful and make wise decisions about how and when we gather.

While it is possible to host or attend gatherings such as funerals, weddings, cultural and other celebrations, it is essential that employees do so while following health guidelines as captured in our [COVID-19 Safety Policy](#).

Employees who attend large gatherings where COVID-19 safety guidelines are not followed (ie. lack of physical distancing, not wearing masks, improper hand sanitization, exceeding 50 people, not maintaining a contact list) become a health risk to other employees. As such, employees may be asked to stay home, self isolate and go for COVID-19 testing. If an employee is not able to perform their regular work duties from home, they may be required to take leave without pay until they are cleared by a negative COVID-19 test or the self-isolation period has ended (14 days from event or contact).

Employees who attend large gatherings where safety guidelines are not followed may be asked to stay home and self isolate – without pay.

Considerations for Employees Attending or Hosting Gatherings:

In order to safely attend gatherings and abide by the COVID-19 employee policy, we recommend employees consider the following when hosting or attending gatherings and events:

- **Event communication and coordination:** prior to attending an event, it is important to learn about the event and whether it will follow safe gathering guidelines. Communicate with hosts or attendees in advance to ensure proper precautions will be followed.
- **Alternate ways to participate and engage:** whether hosting or attending events, consider online options or an outdoor space where physical distancing is possible.
- **Funerals and memorials:** it may not always be possible for you to attend funerals and memorials in person. Consider paying tribute in different ways, such as sending a gift instead of attending, attending virtually, or a memorial over multiple days to allow people to pay tribute at different times, as opposed to everyone gathering at once.
- **Host/participate responsibly:** although your event might seem small and fit within the safe gathering guidelines, it is important not to let your guard down when it comes to following the basic COVID-19 safety precautions when meeting with those outside of your household or personal bubble, which include:
 - Stay home if feeling unwell or experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms (see [COVID-19 Symptoms Awareness](#))
 - Maintaining physical distancing (6ft) – (no hugging, kissing, touching)
 - Not sharing buffet-style meals
 - Wearing masks, especially in enclosed spaces where physical distancing isn't possible
 - Washing hands and sanitizing surfaces frequently
 - Taking extra safety precautions around Elders and other vulnerable people

Important notes:

- *Most indoor spaces are not large enough to accommodate the 50 people limit with proper distancing. Know the occupancy limits of spaces.*
- *The 50-person maximum includes hosts/organizers, and cannot be side-stepped by hosting many different groups of less than 50 on the same day.*

External Links

- Cowichan Tribes Community Protection Bylaw
https://cowichantribes.com/application/files/3915/9191/4750/COVID_19_Community_Protection_Bylaw.pdf
- Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace Policy
https://cowichantribes.com/application/files/2816/0374/5820/COVID19_Safety_in_the_Workplace_Policy_.pdf
- Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 Symptoms Awareness:
https://cowichantribes.com/application/files/3416/0323/6051/COVID-19_Symptoms_-_Making_Safe_Decisions_FINAL.pdf
- Government of BC Notices, Orders and Guidelines For Gathering and Events
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- The Joint COVID-19 Commitment Letter with Big House and Church Leaders
<https://www.facebook.com/cowichan.tribes/posts/1990505784419891>