

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

Communicable disease prevention involves understanding the level of risk in your workplace, application of the fundamentals and implementing appropriate measures, communicating policies and protocols to all workers, and updating measures and safeguards as required.

Managing communicable disease in the workplace is part of an effective Occupational Health and Safety Program. Changes to the policy will be communicated to the staff, posted in the workplace and saved on the secured shared drive in a location accessible to all staff.

The ICG 669 Office is prepared to implement additional prevention measures to deal with communicable diseases and will review the policy at regular intervals as needed to ensure measures are appropriate for the level of risk. During periods of extreme risk, guidance and measure from the Provincial Health Officer could replace this policy.

Ongoing measures:

- Staff who have symptoms of a communicable disease (fever and/or chills, recent onset of coughing, diarrhea etc.) are instructed to stay home until symptoms have improved and they have been approved to return to work by their manager.
- Negotiated compensation packages allow for paid leave and if/when circumstances allow; work from home options can be considered.
- Masks are recommended for employees who have recently recovered from a respiratory infection or illness, or for individuals living with someone who has a respiratory infection.
- Regular hand washing reduces the risk of spreading communicable diseases, hand hygiene is recommended and promoted within the workplace. Signage will remain posted in common areas and hand sanitizing stations placed throughout the office.
- Regular cleaning of common areas by a 3rd party will continue as scheduled. Staff should consider the use of disinfecting wipes or appropriate products provided to sanitize high touch areas after use between cleanings.
- A regular maintenance schedule will be followed to ensure building ventilation is properly maintained and functioning as designed.
- Employees are encouraged and supported in their decisions to receive vaccinations and are permitted time to attend vaccination appointments.

*As per WorkSafe BC OHS Guideline G3.2 Less Formal occupational health and safety (OHS) programs, a less formal OHS program is suitable for the size workforce presently employed, with future hiring needs considered, at the ICG 669 Office.

A less formal program does not require a written safety program but must ensure regular monthly meetings with workers for the discussion of health and safety matters. These meetings must be directed to matters that are concerning the correction of unsafe conditions and practices and the maintenance of cooperative interest in the health and safety of the workforce. Records of the meetings does not mean that formal minutes must be taken. It is sufficient to record when the meeting occurred, who attended, and the matters discussed. The record should mention any specific concerns raised by persons attending and must be available for inspection by WorkSafe BC prevention officers. Retention guidelines suggest that records be kept for a minimum of 2 years.