

Cowichan Bay Waterworks District

Pandemic and Communicable Disease Prevention and Mitigation Policy

POLICY # 2021-12-09

This Pandemic and Communicable Disease Prevention and Mitigation Policy focuses on risk reduction principles to reduce the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. The fundamental components of communicable disease prevention include both ongoing measures and additional measures to be implemented as advised by Public Health:

The elements of communicable disease prevention are similar to the measures followed during the COVID pandemic, including:

- Not coming to work if you are sick
- Healthy hand hygiene practices, including hand washing, covering coughs, sneezes
- Maintaining a clean work environment
- Ensuring adequate ventilation
- Supporting employees in receiving vaccinations for vaccine-preventable conditions

There may also be instances where, based on direction from Public Health, employers may need to re-introduce additional safety measures if there's an elevated risk of COVID-19 transmission or other such communicable disease in the workplace or community.

Ongoing Measures:

- Encourage and support staff who have symptoms of a communicable disease (for example, fever and/or chills, recent onset of coughing, diarrhea), to avoid being at the workplace when sick
- Promoting hand hygiene by providing hand hygiene facilities with supplies, reminding employees through signage to wash their hands regularly and use appropriate hygiene practices
- Maintaining a clean environment through routine cleaning processes
- Ensuring building ventilation is properly maintained and functioning
- Require employees to receive vaccinations and vaccine boosters for vaccine-preventable conditions
- All Trustees and Staff must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19
- Any CBWD Contractor who enters the office at 1760 Pavenham Road must be vaccinated for COVID-19
- All Staff, Trustees, and Contractors who enter the office at 1760 Pavenham Road must receive booster vaccines for COVID-19 as directed and/or recommended by the Public Health Officer
- All Trustees, Staff and Contractors who enter the office at 1760 Pavenham Road must comply with future orders of the Public Health Officer in regards to communicable diseases and pandemics.

Additional Measures as Advised and / or Ordered by Public Health:

- Implement additional prevention measures as required by a medical health officer or the provincial health officer to deal with communicable diseases in the workplace or region, should those be necessary.

COVID-19:

The following COVID-19 protocols are being maintained. Guidance around risk levels and appropriate protocols will be provided by regional public health officials and the provincial health officer.

Physical distancing

- Reduce the number of people in the workplace to help encourage physical distancing. An occupancy limit of that provides at least 5 square metres of unencumbered floor space per person (workers and patrons) is provided.
- No entry of the public into the office area at 1760 Pavenham Road
- No entry into the office area at 1760 Pavenham Road unless proof of vaccine is provided
- Keep the door between the public area and the office area locked.
- Keep the staff entrance door locked.
- Other measures to support physical distancing include virtual meetings, changes to work schedules, changes to how tasks are done, limiting or prohibiting visitors, and reducing the number of customers in the lobby.

Barriers

- Barriers can be made of any material that blocks the transmission of air.
- Barriers must be large enough to create an effective barrier between the breathing zones of the people on each side. A person's breathing zone has a diameter of about 60 cm (24 in.), which means it extends 30 cm (12 in.) in every direction from the person's nose.
- A barrier should be positioned to accommodate the heights of the tallest and shortest people who will be near it. If one person is standing and the other is seated, the barrier should extend 30 cm (12 in.) below the seated person's nose and 30 cm (12 in.) above the standing person's nose. Barriers should also be wide enough to account for the normal movement of people.
- If a barrier needs an opening to pass documents, money, or other materials, the opening should be positioned so that it is out of the breathing zone of both people.
- Barriers should not be designed or installed in such a way that they impede ventilation.
- Barriers must be cleaned regularly to prevent the accumulation and transmission of contaminants. Barriers with openings that people pass materials through should be included in your inventory of commonly touched surfaces and cleaned more frequently.

Worker transportation

- Trustees and Staff shall travel alone in their vehicles in order to practice physical distancing.

Mask Wearing

- Make sure you know how to wear your mask.
- Don't wear mask below the nose or chin. This can increase the risk of exposure.
- Keep mask clean and dry.
- Change masks as necessary. If your mask becomes wet, soiled, or damaged, replace it.
- Make sure you know how to clean your mask. Wash cloth masks every day using the warmest water setting. Store in a clean, dry place to prevent contamination. Disposable masks cannot be laundered.
- Practise good hygiene even if you're wearing a mask. Don't remove your mask to cough or sneeze. After coughing or sneezing, wash your hands. Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Face shields can be used in the workplace in combination with face masks to provide added protection. They cannot be used to replace face masks or other protective measures.

Cleaning

- Identify job tasks where there is an exchange of money, credit cards, or hard-surface materials such as pens, clipboards, and keys and reduce the exchange of materials.
- Identify tools, machinery, and equipment that workers share while working.
 - Implement processes for cleaning and disinfecting these surfaces between uses.
- Identify surfaces around the workplace that people touch often, such as doorknobs, and light switches and ensure that these surfaces are included in the cleaning and disinfecting plan at the workplace.
- Implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices as follows:
 - Use regular soap and water or another cleaning solution to clean surfaces.
 - One of the most common disinfectant solutions is water and bleach. You can make a 500 ppm bleach solution by adding 42 mL (3 tablespoons) of bleach to 4 L (1 gallon) of water.
 - Some sanitizing solutions contain up to 70 percent alcohol and will release flammable vapours. Use these with caution, and don't use them if there are ignition sources nearby.

COVID-19 Vaccination

The principles guiding vaccination requirements are to:

- Remain in compliance with any directives and guidance from the Provincial Health Office and WorkSafeBC, as well as applicable terms and conditions of employment.
- Balance the privacy and human rights issues of employees versus the requirements to maintain a safe work environment for employees and to protect the public in providing services.
- Promote a respectful work environment by ensuring, in accordance with the Standards of Conduct, that employees are aware that harassment or other prohibited conduct directed toward an individual for any reason, including based on their vaccination status or accommodation measures, will not be tolerated.
- Promote the health and safety of employees and others in the workplace through COVID vaccinations and booster shots.
- Employees, contractors, Trustees and others in the workplace must disclose their vaccination status and be fully vaccinated for Covid 19, including booster shots as directed by Public Health.

- **Out of Scope** - members of the public entering the CBWD lobby or interacting with a CBWD employee for the purposes of receiving water service.

Disclosure and Proof of Vaccination Status

Effective November 22, 2021, all Trustees and employees must provide [1] proof of full vaccination and [2] proof of booster vaccination within six months of the the original vaccination, to the District Administrator. Providing proof must be done by showing a digital or paper version of the fully vaccinated BC Vaccine Card and their driver's license. Those with one vaccination dose must provide proof of the date of their first dose. Proof of vaccination must be shown in person.

Those who do not provide proof of vaccination or proof of booster vaccination or refuse to disclose their vaccination status by December 10, 2021 will be considered unvaccinated. Employees who can show a partially vaccinated BC Vaccine Card will be considered partially vaccinated.

Personal information on vaccine status will be collected, retained, used, and disclosed in a manner that respects the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Employees can be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination if they have been found:

- To have deliberately falsified or misrepresented their vaccination status; or
- To have aided another employee to deliberately falsify or misrepresent their vaccination status.

All employees may take reasonable time off as paid leave to get COVID-19 vaccine and booster shots.

Medical Exemptions and Accommodations

Effective December 10, 2021, employees may request an exemption from the vaccine requirement based on a medical condition or other protected ground as defined under BC's *Human Rights Code*. Employees or Trustees or Contractors who enter the office at 1760 Pavenham Raod must submit an exemption request in writing to the District Administrator. The request must contain complete and accurate information describing the need for accommodation including medical documentation, information on relevant limitations, restrictions, and their vaccination status. Requests for exemptions and accommodations will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Employees or Turstees with an approved medical or other human rights exemption must comply with the CBWD's reasonably established accommodation. Employees who fail to participate in the accommodation process can be placed on leave without pay and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Consequences of Non-Vaccination Compliance

For unvaccinated employees:

- Unvaccinated employees except those who have requested and/or been granted a medical exemption or other accommodation will be placed on leave without pay for three months. Unvaccinated employees will not be able to use vacation or other banked leave time in lieu of leave without pay. After three months of being placed on leave without pay, employees who have not become at least partially vaccinated may be terminated.
- Unvaccinated employees who have been placed on leave without pay, and who become partially vaccinated within three months of being placed on leave without pay, may be offered alternative return to work arrangements. Employees must receive their second vaccine dose within 35 days of receiving their first dose. Employees who do not receive their second vaccine within 35 days will be placed back on leave without pay and may be terminated.

For partially vaccinated employees:

- Partially vaccinated employees may be offered alternative work arrangements if they can show they have an appointment booked for their second vaccine dose or declare their intention to receive their second dose.
- Partially vaccinated employees who do not have alternative work arrangements will be placed on leave without pay.
- Partially vaccinated employees who do not receive their second vaccine dose within 35 days of receiving their first dose will be placed on leave without pay. After three months of being placed on leave without pay, employees may be terminated if they have not received their second dose.

Requirements for Hiring New Employees or New Contractors Who Enter the Office at 1769 Pavenham

Effective December 10, 2021, the requirement to be fully vaccinated will be included in all job postings, offer letters and contracts for Contractors that enter the office at 1760 Pavenham Road. Confirmation of full vaccination will occur as part of the hiring confirmation process or as part of pre-employment assessment and screening. It is a condition of employment that all employees be fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated means a person who has a fully vaccinated BC Vaccine Card, an updated booster BC Vaccine card, or can provide equivalent proof of vaccination from another province or country provided Health Canada has approved the type of vaccination(s).

Legislative Authorities and Related Policies and Guidelines

- *Human Rights Code*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Workers' Compensation Act*
- Oath of Employment
- Standards of Conduct