## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

[Organization Name] values the health and safety of its employees and will continue to follow instructions from the government and health authorities on how to keep our workers safe.

This communicable disease policy outlines the precautions that [Organization Name] will take to keep employees safe and healthy in the event of an elevated risk of communicable diseases. It will replace the COVID-19 Safety Plan that was required in British Columbia workplaces between March 2020 and June 29th, 2021.

DEFINITIONS

Communicable disease: 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 diseases that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza” (Source: WorkSafeBC).

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide critical information to [Organization Name] staff to assist in the prevention of communicable diseases.

The organization is responsible for:

* The health and safety of their workers, and all other workers at their workplace
* Continuously monitoring for communicable disease related information from the regional public health officials and the provincial health officer related to their area and industry, and following that guidance and direction should additional measures be necessary in their workplace
* Having a system in place to identify the health hazards, control the risk, and monitor the effectiveness of the controls
* Completing a communicable disease plan and amending it as needed during levels of elevated risk of communicable diseases as communicated by the regional medical health officer
* Making sure everyone entering the workplace receives information about our measures, practices, and policies for managing communicable disease
* Ensuring supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed
* Providing hand-hygiene facilities and any other appropriate supplies or personal protective equipment (PPE) as per section 4.85 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
* Using or posting policies and signage where appropriate to remind employees about proper hygiene practices such as hand washing and coughing etiquette
* Making sure employees are able to raise any safety concerns they may have and work with them to resolve any safety issues

Employees are responsible for:

* Taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of other people within the workplace
* Taking responsibility for their own personal self-care, which includes hand washing and staying home when sick
* Reporting unsafe conditions to their employer
* Following all procedures put in place by the employer to control the risks associated with communicable diseases

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The measures described below have been put into place to ensure safety from communicable diseases. They must be adhered to at all times.

At [Organization Name], the person who is responsible for monitoring public health information is [Insert Name and Position]. Should there be a temporary need to increase safety measures due to an elevated risk in the community or industry we work in, additional precautions will be communicated to employees and must be adhered to.

Stay at Home

Employees who are exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease (fever, chills, cough, diarrhea) are asked to remain at home when they are unwell. Please utilize the regular sick day procedures and channels to notify your manager or other appropriate parties. The organization will facilitate temporary work from home arrangements, where possible.

Employees who exhibit symptoms upon arrival at the workplace or become ill during the day should immediately withdraw from their coworkers, notify their supervisors, and return home.

Employees should only return to work when they have been free of symptoms for [insert length of time]. Please refer to our Sick Policy for further information.

Hygiene and Cleaning

**Personal Hygiene/Cleaning**

Employees are always encouraged to use safe hygiene practices such as:

* Employees must frequently wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. Soap and warm water for handwashing shall be available in all wash areas.
* When sneezing or coughing, use a disposable tissue or the crease of the elbow to cover the mouth and nose rather than using the hands.
* [Add additional items you will keep in place at all times]

When the risk of a communicable disease is elevated, further protections must be practiced such as:

* All workstations and entrances/exits will have hand sanitizers, alcohol, and disinfectants available.
* Employees are not permitted to share food, beverages, or utensils.
* Employees are required to wear a mask.
* Avoid unnecessary contact and consider distancing yourself physically.
* Adhere to any other items recommended by your local public health department

Facility, Vehicle, and Equipment Hygiene

* Cleaning products containing soap or detergent will be used to clean the surfaces. Additionally, said products would be installed in all workstations.
* When the risk of contracting a communicable disease is low, daily cleaning is sufficient. Otherwise, as risk increases, more frequent cleaning will be required. Frequent cleaning is also required in high-traffic areas.
* When risks are low, disinfection will occur once daily; however, as risks increase, disinfection will occur more frequently. Disinfectants will be available at all workstations. Frequent disinfecting is also required in high-traffic areas.
* If a sick person has been in the facility within the last 24 hours, the space will be cleaned AND disinfected immediately.
* Cleaning personnel will be instructed in the proper use of cleaning products.
* Safety precautions regarding the use of cleaning products would be posted in public areas.
* [Organization Name] will ensure that cleaning products and disinfectants are safe to use by individuals with asthma.
* PPE will be made available in workplaces in sufficient quantities and sets to address the identified hazard.
* Windows will remain open throughout the cleaning and disinfecting process to ensure adequate ventilation.
* Cleaning products and defects will be appropriately labelled to prevent accidental ingestion or being mixed with other chemicals.

Ventilation

[Organization Name] will provide an appropriate supply of fresh outdoor air to help dilute naturally-accumulated contaminants and pollutants that accumulate indoors to support good indoor air quality.

* [Organization Name] will ensure the design, operation, and maintenance of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems follow applicable Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, or problem-solve other solutions, such opening windows where this is not possible
* Filters will be changed weekly, and HVAC systems will be inspected.
* Occupancy of facilities and vehicles will be restricted during periods of communicable disease outbreaks.
* During high risk of communicable disease spread, windows will be opened to allow better ventilation.

Employee Vaccination

[Organization Name] recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs in reducing illness, disability, and death from community-acquired diseases and will support public health messaging about the importance of vaccines against communicable diseases.

While employees are encouraged to participate in public health vaccination programs, [Organization Name] will not require employees to be vaccinated and will not discriminate against those who choose not to be vaccinated. There will be no adverse consequences for those individuals who do not receive a vaccination or do not wish to share information about their vaccination status.

Employee Mental Health

[Organization Name] recognizes that psychological safety risks exist at all times, even more so during times of increased communicable disease risk. Emotional stress, anxiety, or concern are natural during times of widespread disease outbreaks. Employees who believe they are suffering from negative mental health consequences are encouraged to seek assistance immediately.

At [Organization Name], we have the following support available to you:

* Insert all that apply (examples: Employee Assistance Program)

Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

[Organization Name] respects the legal right of employees to refuse work they have reasonable cause to believe is unsafe due to a thing or condition that may expose a worker to an excessive or unwarranted risk of injury or occupational disease.

Employees should follow the step-by-step government-mandated work refusal process, as outlined in our Work Refusal Process. To initiate a work refusal, a worker must immediately report the circumstances of the unsafe condition to their supervisor or employer. There will be no negative consequences or discriminatory actions for employees who exercise their right to refuse in good faith.

Privacy of Information

All personal or medical information acquired by [Organization Name] about communicable diseases will be treated with the utmost confidentiality according to mandated governmental privacy standards.