

COVID 19 SAFETY PLAN
THE LOWER MAINLAND PURPOSE SOCIETY
40 Begbie Street Building
New Westminster, B.C.

OVERVIEW

At The Lower Mainland Purpose Society, we have developed a COVID-19 Safety Plan, outlining the control measures, policies, procedures, protocols, communication plans, and monitoring processes necessary to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

The information that follows pertains only to the employees, visitors, programs and services that operate from the 40 Begbie Street location under the total purview of the Purpose Society Policies and Procedures. A number of **Child Care Facilities** and the **Purpose Independent School** are Purpose Society programs that are also regulated by the Fraser Health Authority (Licencing) and the Ministry of Education requirements. The **Adult Medical Clinic** is staffed by the Vancouver Infectious Diseases Centre and they have specific requirements which Purpose Staff have reviewed and accepted. See separate Safety Plans under separate covers for those programs.

Our plan follows the six-step process as outlined by the [Work Safe BC COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). By [Order of the Provincial Health Officer](#) dated May 14, 2020, a copy of our COVID-19 Safety Plan and other accompanying documentation is posted and readily available for review by workers, visitors, contractors, suppliers, and any other person who could be providing services at our workplace. This COVID-19 Safety Plan is posted on our website here: <https://purposesociety.org/>

VIRUS TRANSMISSION

According to the Public Health Officer, B.C., the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is spread by liquid droplets when a person coughs, sneezes, or sometimes, when a person talks. If you are in close contact with an infected person, the virus can enter the body if droplets get into the eyes, nose, or throat. These droplets usually land one to two meters away, but they can land on another person if they are close by. Diseases can spread if droplets with the virus enter the body through the eyes, nose or throat.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer you come to other people, the more time you spend near them, and the more people you are near.

COVID-19 can also spread by touch. If droplets are left on objects and surfaces after an infected person sneezes, coughs on, or touches them, other people may become infected by touching these objects or surfaces, and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. However, it is unclear as to how long the droplets remain infectious.

The risk of surface transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

STEP 1: WORKPLACE RISK ASSESSMENT

To assess the risk of transmission of Covid 19, we have consulted:

- Information about COVID-19 as offered by the Public Health Authorities
- Our staff and management team
- Our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

We have assessed 40 Begbie Street and have identified where there may be risks for transmission, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. We also determined who could be at risk of exposure, including staff, clients, and the public. To complete this assessment:

- We have involved staff and management to assess the risks.
- We have identified areas where people gather, such as offices, counselling rooms, kitchen spaces, and have posted occupancy limitations.
- We have identified job tasks and processes where staff are close to one another or to clients.
- We have identified equipment that employees share while working.
- We have identified equipment surfaces that people touch often, such as doors, doorknobs, handles, countertops, faucets, tables, light switches, and keys.

STEP 2: IMPLEMENT CONTROL MEASURES, INCLUDING POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS TO REDUCE THE RISKS

Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible, staff, clients, and visitors will use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection, and will consider controls from additional levels if the first level isn't entirely feasible or where it does not completely control the risk. Staff and clients are expected to implement controls from multiple levels, where needed, in order to address the risk as fully as possible.

[1] FIRST LEVEL: ELIMINATION

Working Remotely

- Purpose Society is a multi social service agency and the focus is to provide services to individuals, youth and families. There are a limited number of staff who can work remotely. Administration staff need to be on site in order to be available to each other and to the management/supervisory staff in order for the agency to keep operating efficiently.

Capacity for Physical Distancing

- Approximately 45 staff work from the Begbie Street location. It is recommended that each individual have 5 square meters of space; 45 staff equals 225 square meters (2500 square feet). The square footage of the Begbie street location is 18,000 square feet.
- Of the 45 staff, 14 hold outreach positions, which means that they are frequently out of the building to do their jobs.
- When Purpose School is in full operation, there are approximately 85 individuals in the designated school area (70 students plus 15 school staff). At 5 square meters per person, this equals 425 m², or 4600 square feet. The dedicated school space is approximately 7000 square feet.
- Staff who provide on-site services, such as therapy or individual support, will maintain physical distancing (i.e. therapy is done in meeting space where 6 feet distance can be maintained between therapist and client).
- During the provision of off site services (e.g. individual youth work, family development work, supervised access) which take place in community venues or in client homes, staff will ensure physical distancing is maintained. Whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. while transporting clients in vehicles), masks will be worn by staff and clients.

Occupancy Limits

- Occupancy limits have been established for work spaces and meeting rooms in the building. Occupancy limits are identified on a notice attached to the door of the work area.
- Occupancy limits were calculated as an approximate number using the usable square footage available in the room and measuring 2m (6ft) of distance between workstations.

Limiting Visitors

- The reception area is limited to two individuals at a time. If more than two people wish to enter the building, they are asked to wait outside until someone leaves.
- Clients are encouraged to schedule their visits to receive support or attend programs.
- Staff are not to have conversations with clients or other staff in the reception area. Clients will be taken outside to have extended conversations or downstairs to a meeting space that will allow social distancing.
- Services such as shower use and laundry services for clients have been suspended.

Rearranged Work Spaces

- Rooms that were not intended as work spaces have been converted to work spaces for staff including the counselling room and family room.
- In shared workspaces, staff who were not able to properly physically distance have been moved to unoccupied rooms.
- Furniture has been rearranged to allow for better physical distancing in shared workspaces.
- Staff in shared workspaces have been moved to larger offices and staff working alone have been moved to smaller offices.
- The administrative staff require being in close contact to do their work tasks effectively and cannot properly practice physical distancing due to spacing. As a work cohort, their workspace is not accessible to the rest of the staff. Any staff leaving the administrative area require masks.
- Due to limited usable space and small room sizes, it is not always possible for staff and clients to maintain proper physical distance. Adhere to the principle of physical distancing where possible, by:
 - Minimizing the frequency of direct physical contact (including between staff)
 - Creating smaller groups of staff ('pods'/cohorts) and keeping these groups separate from each other.
 - Minimizing closed-door meetings, especially in smaller meeting rooms.
 - Directing everyone that the use of masks is mandatory where physical distancing is not possible, especially in smaller meeting rooms.

Outreach Workers

- Of the 45 staff who work out of the Begbie Street location, 14 work in outreach positions. These staff are frequently offsite working with clients in the community.
- If possible, Outreach staff are encouraged to meet with clients by phone or video call as an alternative to in-person meetings.
- Outreach staff have reduced support services in the client's homes. If going into client homes, they should maximize opportunities for ventilation when possible (e.g. leaving a door between rooms open, opening a window). All clients who will be in the home at the time of the session must answer 'no' to the [COVID screening questions](#) on the day of session, prior to the worker entering the home.
- Staff are required to ask the COVID-19 screening questions prior to meeting with clients. Clients must answer 'no' to the COVID screening questions on the day of the session, prior to meeting with the worker. A temperature check can also be completed on the client by the staff's request.
- Clients and staff are to maintain proper physical distance.

- Both the staff and client are required to wear masks when meeting. If mask wearing is deemed a substantial limitation to service, staff or the client may remove their mask(s) only if the worker is wearing a face shield and physical distance is maintained.
- When in the office, Outreach staff are to work at their designated workstations.
- It is recommend that the outreach workers coordinate their schedules to reduce the number of people in the shared work space.
- In addition, Outreach staff adjust their schedules to meet client needs, therefore, often working into early evening and occasionally on weekends. These operational practices reduce the number of staff in the building at any one time.

[2] SECOND LEVEL: ENGINEERING CONTROLS

Physical Barriers

- The Receptionist distributes harm reduction supplies. Our Receptionist is behind a plastic sliding window that can be opened or closed partially or completely. In order to further protect her, a table has been placed in front of the reception window to increase the physical distance between the receptionist and those people coming in for service and/or supplies.
- Our clinic lobby also has a plastic barrier that is used during clinic hours to separate any clinic visitors from the clinic staff during the intake process.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

General janitorial work is done by Integral Building Maintenance Inc. based on a signed agreement outlining cleaning tasks and frequency of cleaning. See attached.

- Email from Integral Janitorial (Effective March 12, 2020)

“With the official announcement of COVID-19 as a pandemic, and an increase in the verified and suspected cases in Canada, we wanted to reach out and assure you that Integral has already implemented precautionary steps at your facility, and has formal pandemic planning in place should the threat level escalate.

Currently, our cleaners have been instructed to increase the frequency of touchpoint cleaning throughout your facility, regardless of the existing scope of services. This includes detailed cleaning throughout your washrooms, which are intrinsically the highest risk areas, as well as an expected destination for any visitors or staff that may be suffering from early symptoms.

In addition to the washrooms, our staff have been advised to conduct daily cleaning of the most common touchpoints throughout your facility, such as light

switches, door knobs, elevator panels/buttons, handrails and common staff areas such as lunchroom tables/cupboards/appliances.”

Specifically, the Purpose Society is paying additional monies to have the school area and bathrooms deep cleaned every evening.

- Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected three to four times per day.
 - Upper Level Front Lobby - High touch surfaces in the front lobby area are wiped with disinfectant 3 times per day; twice by a Purpose School staff and once by an Administration staff. Following each cleaning, staff sign a record sheet posted in the lobby.
 - Lower Level Staircase Hand Rail and Clinic Waiting Area - This area is cleaned once per day by an Administration staff and three times per week following the health clinics. During the Wednesday health clinic, a staff member continually sanitizes tables and chairs that are used by patients visiting the clinic.
- High touch surfaces such as the door handles of 40 and 38 Begbie Street are cleaned every hour by the Administration staff.
- Garbage and recycling bins are emptied every other day, or when full.
- If a staff, client, or visitor leaves the site due to symptoms of COVID-1, the space will be cleaned and disinfected immediately, with special attention the areas and surfaces touched and used by that person.
- An adequate supply of approved cleaning and disinfecting products and materials is maintained at all times.

Food Preparation

- Disposable cups/containers, knives, forks, spoons are used for clients and during clinic operations. Any food that is distributed is packaged.
- It is standard procedure that all dishes used by staff must be washed using the dishwasher to ensure the dishes are washed at a very high temperature (there is no hand washing of dishes).
- Homemade food items for sharing (i.e. for birthdays, etc.) are not allowed at this time.
- Staff are directed to wash their hands frequently and especially after either of the above and after touching non-food or potentially contaminated surfaces (refrigerator handles, small appliances, etc.)

Other Methods to Control Risks

- Limit sharing of supplies and equipment (e.g., pens, telephone, and computers).
- Provide adequate amount of high touch materials, such as pens, in order to minimize sharing.
- Ensure adequate ventilation and keep doors open, wherever possible.
- No physical or high-energy activities that increase respiratory output (heavy breathing, large emission of droplets) will occur within the space.
- Staff will wear latex gloves when unloading the dishwasher and putting clean dishes in the cupboards (this instruction is posted in the kitchens).

[3] THIRD LEVEL: ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS AND PERSONAL MEASURES

Administrative Controls

- The Purpose School is employing a designated directional flow of movement for students in the school (see *Purpose School COVID 19 Safety Plan* for more detail).
- During clinic hours, clinic visitors have a directional flow of movement to enter and exit the clinic.
- Masks must be worn when employees leave their office and during any interpersonal interactions that take place between staff or between staff and clients.
- Staff are to maintain physical distancing during any work-related meetings.

Personal Measures

The following staff, or other persons **must stay home and self isolate**:

- A person confirmed by the Public Health Authority as a case of COVID-19; or
- A person confirmed by the Public Health Authority as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak of COVID-19; or
- A person who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days. At the beginning of the COVID pandemic, staff who had travelled were told to self isolate for 14 days upon their return to Canada. Staff are no longer travelling. If staff have been away from work (e.g. vacation), they are screened as to whether they have experienced any illness or symptoms of COVID 19 during the previous 10 days. If they have, they are told to remain home and self-isolate for 14 days.

Anyone required to self-isolate will be supported by public health. Additional information is available from BCCDC: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

Stay Home When Sick

Staying home when sick is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. When COVID-19 is present in the community, the risk of introducing COVID-19 at the work site is reduced if staff:

- Perform a **daily health check**.including taking temperature
- **Stay at home** when sick.
- Get a health assessment and/or **COVID-19** test when sick.

Daily Health Check

A daily health check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to the work site when they are infectious. Symptoms of COVID-19 can be mild and are similar to other respiratory infections.

- Before arriving at work, staff are asked to email their answers to the COVID health screening questions pertaining to sore throat, coughing, and chest pains etc. to Reception staff (see attached). Staff have been directed that if they answer yes to any of these questions, they should not come to work and stay home.
- Upon their arrival to the Begbie Street building, Reception staff take the temperature of arriving staff. If they show a fever, they are instructed to go home.
- Staff have been directed to report to their supervisor if they become ill during the work day. If they are experiencing COVID 19 related symptoms, they are to immediately arrange to be tested. They cannot return to work until they receive a negative test result.
- Staff are also told to stay home when they are experiencing non-COVID 19 symptoms that may be a common cold or flu.
- Clients and other visitors to the building are asked the health screening questions upon entering the building and their temperature is taken. If they answer yes to any of the questions or have a temperature, they are asked to leave the premises. Clients and other visitors must wear a face mask at all times while in the building.

Onsite Services

- When clients attend the building for service, they are given a mask if not wearing one, are asked the health screening questions and their temperature is taken. If they respond in the affirmative to any of the questions or they have a temperature, they are asked to leave the building. The exception to this might be those clients accessing the medical health clinics. However, these clients are kept isolated from staff and others not connected to the clinic.

- All people attending the medical clinics wait outside, wear masks and are kept isolated from others.
- If a client appears to show symptoms of COVID 19 during their visit, i.e. coughing, sore throat, or feeling unwell, the visit is terminated and they are asked to leave the premises.

Vehicles

A key component of a number of Purpose Society outreach services requires that staff transport clients in their own vehicles or in Purpose owned vehicles. The following strategies are employed when transporting clients in order to reduce the risk of COVID transmission:

- Staff have reduced the transport of clients in vehicles; however, during transport it is not always possible for the staff and client to maintain proper physical distance. Adhere to the principle of reducing transmission where possible, by:
 - Conducting of a COVID-19 screening of the client, prior to meeting them.
 - Both staff and client are to sanitize hands before they enter the vehicle and again once they leave the vehicle.
 - Both staff and client are to wear face masks throughout the transportation.
 - The staff may consider having the client sit in the rear seat diagonally across from the driver of the vehicle to encourage physical distancing. This should only occur if:
 - knowledge of the client is sufficient to ensure that sitting behind the staff and out of the line of site does not pose a safety risk for the client or the staff person;
 - the worker knows whether the client has a history of violence and the client does not pose additional safety risks for either themselves or the staff person.
- Ensure that the touch surfaces on the outside and inside of the vehicle are disinfected prior to driving.
- All touch surfaces must be cleaned with disinfectant upon conclusion of the transport.
- Ensure that ventilation is not recycling.
- Keeping windows open if possible, given weather conditions.

[4] FOURTH LEVEL: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Masks

- Masks must be worn at the work site including when employees leave their office and during any interpersonal interactions that take place between staff or between staff and clients.

- Staff can remove their masks while they are working independently provided they are maintaining social distance, while they are alone in their offices and when they are not interacting with others.
- If staff share an office, they must wear their masks continually.
- If an employee cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition, a face shield is required.
- The Purpose Society provides masks, rubber gloves if requested and sanitizer to all employees and clients. These things are always available at the reception desk.

STEP 3: DEVELOP COMMUNICATION PLANS AND TRAINING

Communication Plans and Training

All staff working at the Begbie Street building have a Purpose email account. All information and updates regarding COVID 19 are distributed via an emailed Staff Memo to all Purpose staff. These Memos also contain directions regarding required procedures to follow by staff. A binder of these emails is kept in the Reception area.

- All staff have been informed and are kept updated about any changes on COVID-19
- Guidelines have been printed, discussed, and posted on the OHS bulletin board
- COVID-19 Related signs are posted throughout the work site
- Supervisors monitor the staff and workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed. There are no disciplinary measures taken if staff fail to follow directions.

Postings

Various types of information relating to COVID 19 are posted throughout the building. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Occupancy limits for work spaces and lobby
- Information on required physical distancing
- Information on safety practices for common areas
- Instructions on hand washing
- Instructions on how to properly wear a mask
- Instructions on environmental cleaning and disinfectants for clinic settings
- Posters prohibiting entrance to a work space if they are sick
- Record of common area 'touch surface' cleaning
- Occupational Health and Safety Committee minutes
- Occupational Health and Safety Committee members
- Directional floor markings

Supervision/Staff Meetings

Staff members receive supervision from their supervisor on a regular basis. In addition to information and training directed at the staff body as a whole, individual and/or group information sharing and training will occur during individual supervision sessions as well as during team meetings.

This format allows staff to ask questions, listen to explanations, clarify practices and therefore more fully understand the intent of the direction they are receiving and receive additional specific instruction if necessary.

Other Communication

Any notifications of exposure or potential exposure are passed on to the affected individual in a personal conversation by their supervisor. A plan is developed and arrangements made for testing, self-isolation, or other notifications as necessary. The supervisor will follow up with the employee to ensure all parts of the plan have been addressed and any risk minimized.

STEP 5: MONITOR OUR WORKPLACE AND UPDATING OUR PLANS AS NEEDED

Updating the Safety Plan as Necessary

- A plan to monitor the risks has been implemented (updated cleaning checklists, policies and procedures, etc.). Changes are made as necessary.
- Updates are provided to staff through regularly through supervision/staff meetings, and by email.
- Staff will raise any health and safety concerns with their supervisor.
- When resolving safety issues, the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and management representative will be involved.

Monitoring

Government Requirements

It is the responsibility of all management and supervisory staff to keep current on COVID 19 related information and requirements as issued from government sources. Specific requirements are issued from the Ministry of Education (Independent Schools Branch), the Fraser Health Authority, the Ministry of Health and WorkSafe BC.

Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHS)

The agency's *OHS Committee* meets monthly and reviews COVID 19 related practice and issues. As the pandemic situation evolves, the *OHS Committee* will ensure that operational practices and procedures are adjusted to meet the needs.

Management Team

The Management Team meets bi-weekly and reviews COVID 19 related practice and issues, making adjustments to existing practices and procedures as needed. One manager sits on the *OHS Committee* to liaise between the two groups.

Individual managers/supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff teams are fully aware of, and following, existing required practices and procedures.

STEP 6: ASSESS AND ADDRESS RISKS FROM RESUMING OPERATIONS

This section does not apply as the work site of 40 Begbie Street was never closed due to COVID-19.