

# Transitioning from COVID-19 to communicable disease prevention in the workplace

Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC

**Chris Back** Director, OHS Consultation & Education Services

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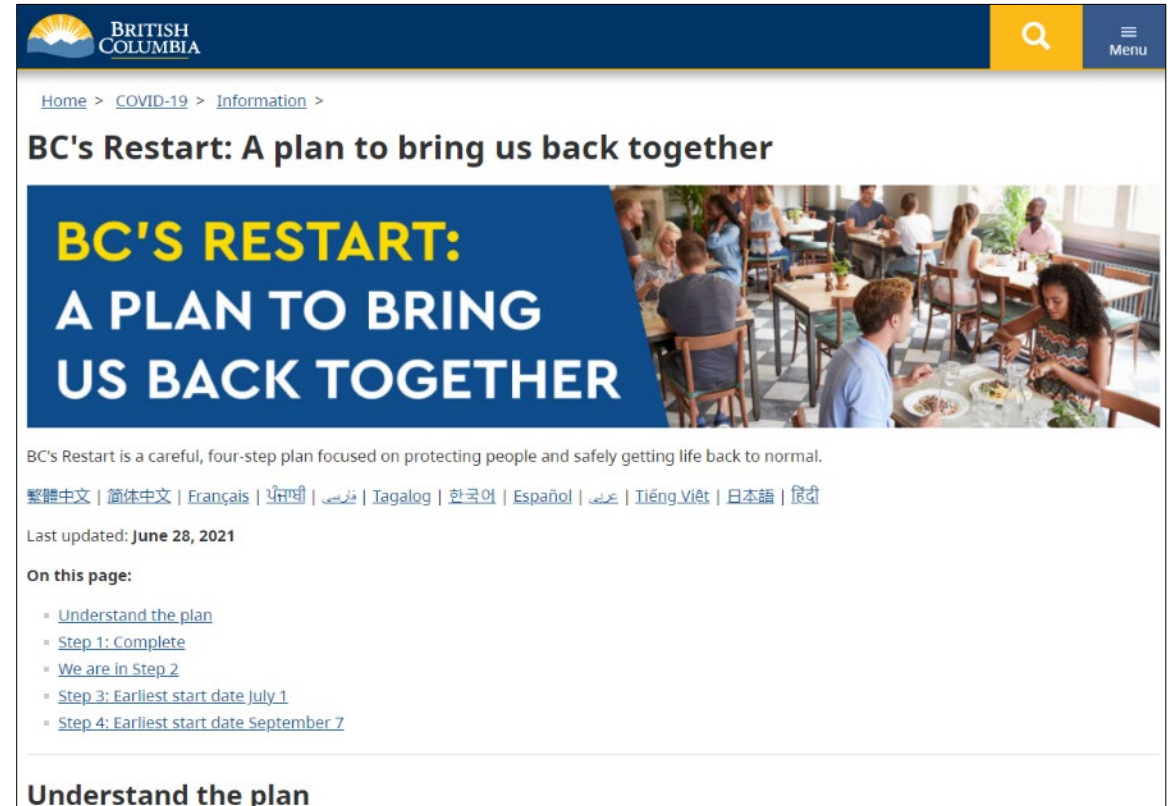
# Agenda

- 1 Where we are today
- 2 Developing a communicable disease prevention plan
- 3 Information and resources
- 4 Questions

Where we are today

# BC's Restart

- BC's Restart is the provincial government's four-step plan to gradually restart important social connections, businesses, and activities.
- Each step will see a gradual loosening of restrictions and protocols outlined under existing orders from the provincial health officer.
- Learn more at [www.gov.bc.ca/restartbc](http://www.gov.bc.ca/restartbc).



The screenshot shows the top portion of the BC's Restart webpage. At the top left is the British Columbia logo. To its right is a search icon and a menu icon. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > COVID-19 > Information >. The main heading is "BC's Restart: A plan to bring us back together". Below this is a large blue banner with the text "BC'S RESTART: A PLAN TO BRING US BACK TOGETHER" in white and yellow. To the right of the banner is a photograph of people dining in a restaurant. Below the banner is a short paragraph: "BC's Restart is a careful, four-step plan focused on protecting people and safely getting life back to normal." This is followed by a list of language options: 繁體中文 | 简体中文 | Français | ਪੰਜਾਬੀ | العربية | Tagalog | 한국어 | Español | العربية | Tiếng Việt | 日本語 | हिंदी. Below the language options is the text "Last updated: June 28, 2021". Underneath is a section titled "On this page:" with a list of links: Understand the plan, Step 1: Complete, We are in Step 2, Step 3: Earliest start date July 1, and Step 4: Earliest start date September 7. At the bottom of the screenshot is the heading "Understand the plan".

# Step 3: Transition to communicable disease prevention

- Provincial health officer statement to employers on June 17:
  - COVID-19 Safety Plans no longer required.
  - Transition to communicable disease prevention.
  - Maintain existing COVID-19 protocols where they don't negatively interfere with business operations.



## **Provincial Health Officer Statement for Employers on Transitioning from COVID-19 Safety Plans to Communicable Disease Plans**

**June 17, 2021**

British Columbians have worked very hard and sacrificed much to deal with COVID-19. Due to this effort, including very good immunization uptake, the data show us that we are in a good position right now. Hospitalizations, outbreaks, clusters and cases in our community are declining. Immunization is climbing, with over 75% of adults immunized. Vaccine uptake, including second doses continues to be strong. What we need to do now is take the next careful steps forward.

Throughout the pandemic public health has been working closely with WorkSafeBC to protect workers and the public. Given the positive results for workplaces, we are going to build on the lessons learned from implementation of COVID-19 specific safety plans, which have provided important guidance for employers, and move to incorporating the important principles of communicable disease prevention into all workplaces.

To support this transition, I am advising that employers start shifting from COVID-19 Safety

Developing a communicable disease  
prevention plan

# A guide for employers

**Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers** describes a four-step process to help employers reduce the risk of communicable disease in their workplace.



## Step 1 Understand the risk

## Step 2 Implement measures, practices, and policies to reduce the risk

- Ongoing measures — maintain at all times
- Additional measures — implemented as advised by Public Health

## Step 3 Communicate measures, practices and policies

## Step 4 Monitor the workplace and update plan as necessary

# Step 1: Understand the risk

- Monitor and review communicable disease-related information
  - Orders, guidance, notices, and recommendations issued by a medical health officer or the provincial health officer.
  - Local or regional level or within a workplace.
- Employers are required to:
  - Follow the guidance and direction provided



Source (image): The Canadian Press



## Step 2: Implement measures, practices and policies to reduce risk

### Ongoing measures — maintain at all times

- Policies to support staff with symptoms
- Provide hand-hygiene facilities
- Maintain a clean environment
- Ensure building ventilation is adequate and properly maintained
- Support employees in receiving vaccinations



## Step 2: Implement measures, practices and policies to reduce risk



### **Additional measures – implement as advised by Public Health**

- Will depend on the type of disease and methods of transmission.
- May include measures used in your COVID-19 Safety Plan, such as:
  - Physical distancing
  - Barriers
  - Masks
  - Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting
  - Modified worker transportation practices
  - Modified worker accommodation practices

# Step 3: Communicate measures, practices, and policies

- Ensure all workers know and understand
- Plan, policies and practices
  - Staying home when sick
  - Working from home
- Post signage
- Make sure supervisors are knowledgeable
- Provide information to workers in a language they understand



*Be mindful that some aspects of managing communicable disease in the workplace may raise privacy and confidentiality issues. Seek advice on these issues as necessary.*



# Step 4: Monitor your workplace and update your plan

- Use workplace inspections and ongoing supervision to update policies and procedures as needed.
- Ensure workers can raise safety concerns.
- Ensure any new public health guidance, notices, and orders are reflected.



# Involve your workers

## Joint health and safety committees

- Work with joint occupational health and safety committee (JOHSC) members or worker representatives to:
  - Identify and find solutions to workplace health and safety issues.
  - Includes concerns about exposure to COVID-19.
  - Joint committees must continue to meet regularly as required under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.



Information and resources

**WORK SAFE BC** Forms & Resources Law & Policy About Us Contact Us Log in / Create an account

COVID-19 Health & Safety Insurance Claims I Am a... Search worksafebc.com

Home > COVID-19 and communicable disease > Step 3 of BC's Restart: Communicable disease prevention

**COVID-19 and communicable disease**

**Step 3 of BC's Restart: Communicable disease prevention**

Communicable disease resources

Claims

Insurance

Paid Sick-Leave Reimbursement Program

Vaccination and the workplace

COVID-19 and communicable disease information for workers

COVID-19 and communicable disease information for employers

Information in other languages

Prevention Services data

Public health links

**Step 3 of BC's Restart: Communicable disease prevention**

In March 2020, the B.C. government declared a provincial state of emergency in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) worldwide pandemic. WorkSafeBC required employers to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlined the protocols and policies in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace. Employers were required by order of the provincial health officer to post a copy of these COVID-19 Safety Plans.

As vaccinations have become widely available to British Columbians, the overall risk of COVID-19 transmission is reduced. However, the virus may still circulate, as will the viruses for other communicable diseases, such as seasonal influenza, norovirus, and others.

The B.C. government's Restart plan [outlines](#) the four steps to reduce restrictions in public spaces and in workplaces. Step 3 began on July 1, 2021, and started a transition period in how COVID-19 is managed in workplaces.

**Step 3 of BC's Restart**

In Step 3 of the Restart plan, employers are no longer required to maintain a COVID-19 Safety Plan, and can instead transition to communicable disease prevention. To learn more, see the statement [issued](#) by the provincial health officer on June 17 to employers on transitioning from COVID-19 Safety Plans to communicable disease prevention.

**New (June 30): Planning template added to employer guide**

Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers describes a four-step process to help employers reduce the risk of communicable disease in their workplace. We've revised the guide to include a template that may be useful for employers in documenting and communicating their communicable disease prevention measures, practices, and policies.

[From COVID-19 Safety Plans to communicable disease prevention](#)

[Frequently asked questions](#)

[Responding to elevated risk](#)

[If you have a question or concern](#)

[Additional measures](#)

[Related links](#)

Landing page at  
[www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart)

*(also accessible by clicking on image on worksafebc.com home page)*



# Key WorkSafeBC health & safety resources



In addition to the guide for employers, some former COVID-19 resources have evolved to provide support for communicable disease prevention, either on a day-to-day basis or when there is elevated risk.

- Ventilation and air circulation
- Handwashing
- Occupancy limit
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- How to use a mask

See our communicable disease resources, including translations in multiple languages, at [worksafebc.com/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart](https://worksafebc.com/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart).



# OHS Guideline G-P2-21 Communicable disease prevention

OHS Guidelines Part 2 Division 4

## G-P2-21 Communicable disease prevention Preliminary Issue July 1, 2021

### Regulatory excerpt

Section 21 of the *Workers Compensation Act* ("Act") states, in part:

#### General duties of employers

- 21 (1) Every employer must
- (a) ensure the health and safety of
    - (i) all workers working for that employer, and
    - (ii) any other workers present at a workplace at which that employer's work is being carried out, and
  - (b) comply with the OHS provisions, the regulations and any applicable orders.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), an employer must
- (a) remedy any workplace conditions that are hazardous to the health or safety of the employer's workers,
  - (b) ensure that the employer's workers
    - (i) are made aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable health or safety hazards to which they are likely to be exposed by their work,  
...
  - (c) establish occupational health and safety policies and programs in accordance with the regulations,
  - (d) provide and maintain in good condition protective equipment, devices and clothing as required by regulation and ensure that these are used by the employer's workers,
  - (e) provide to the employer's workers the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of those workers in carrying out their work and to ensure the health and safety of other workers at the workplace,  
...
  - (g) consult and cooperate with the joint committees and worker health and safety representatives for workplaces of the employer, and  
...

Provides employers and workers with a better understanding of workplace requirements to implement communicable disease prevention, with an effective date of July 1, 2021.

- Summarizes key elements of communicable disease management
- Provides more context around each of the ongoing measures

*Available on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) in the Searchable OHS Regulation and the landing page for Step 3 of BC's Restart: Communicable disease prevention*

# Be aware of other health and safety risks in your workplace

- Managing communicable disease at your workplace is part of an effective Occupational Health and Safety Program.
- Health and safety programs are aimed at ensuring workers are protected, risks are minimized, and a healthy and safe workplace is maintained.
- All employers must establish some form of health and safety program at the workplace.

Learn how to create and manage a healthy and safe workplace at [worksafebc.com/health-safety/create-manage](https://worksafebc.com/health-safety/create-manage).

Common issues and questions

# Worker abuse due to COVID-19 policies

Restaurants, hotels, retail establishments, and other businesses have reported that some customers have been verbally abusing staff when asked to follow COVID-19 protocols.

Employer responsibilities include:

- Ensuring workers have the training and strategies to address the risk of violence that may arise as customers and members of the public adapt to restrictions or modifications to the workplace
- Ensuring that an appropriate violence prevention program is in place

For more information see *Take Care: How to Develop and Implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Program*, available on [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com)

# Mental Health: Helping your workers cope

**Psychological health is of equal importance to physical health.**

## Here's how you can help:

- Support the mental well-being of workers by helping them manage stress, anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 outbreak.
  - [Managing the mental health effects of COVID-19 in the workplace: A guide for employers](#)
  - [Addressing the mental health effects of COVID-19 in the workplace: A guide for workers](#)
- Leveraging other resources
  - [Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#) (Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)
  - [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19](#) (World Health Organization)
  - [Coronavirus: Managing Stress and Anxiety](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association)
  - [Mental Health and COVID-19](#) (Conference Board of Canada)
  - [Taking Care of Your Mental Health \(COVID-19\)](#) (Public Health Agency of Canada)

# Working from home: responsibilities & policy

Many health and safety **roles, rights, and responsibilities** of employers and workers are just as applicable for **working at home** as they are for more traditional workplaces, including but not limited to:

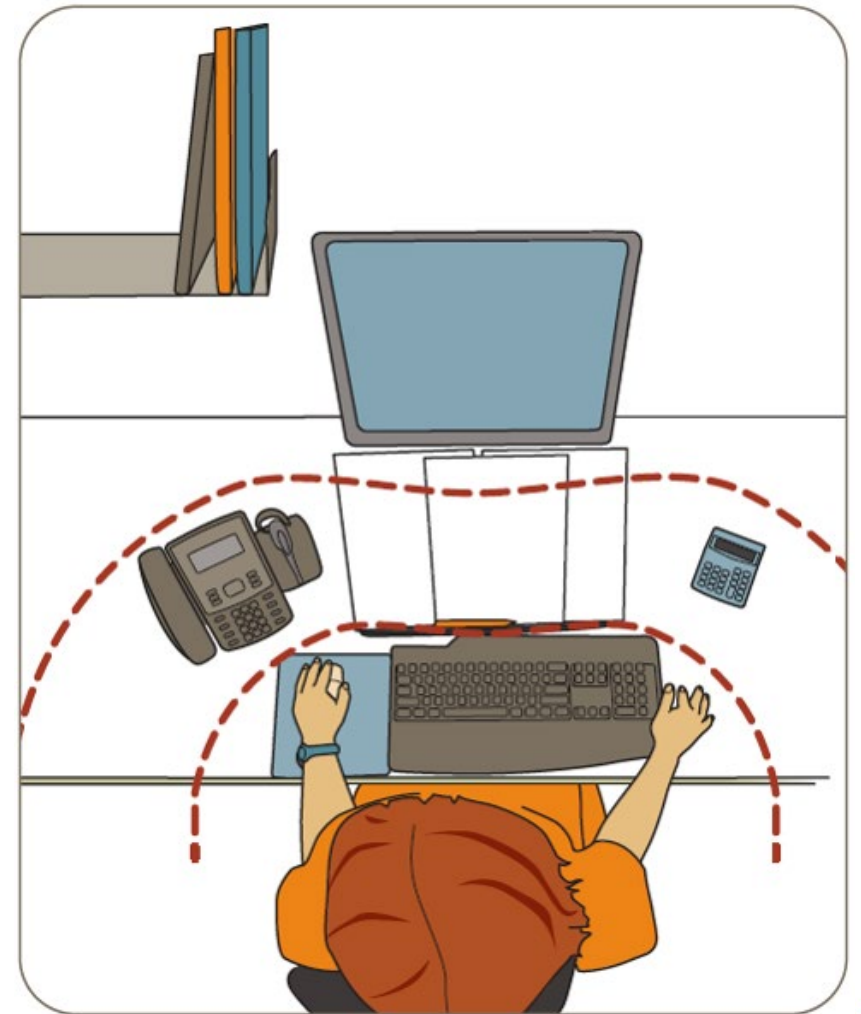
- Hazard and risk assessment of the at-home workplace
- Procedures for working safely at home, including ergonomics
- Evacuation from the home in an emergency and emergency contacts
- Education and training
- Worker's duty to follow safe work procedures
- Reporting workplace injuries
- Check-in procedures

Develop a health and safety **working at home policy** which includes, at minimum, all of these topics.

# Computer workstation: preventing injury

Prevent **musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs)** by assessing the home workstation, identifying risks, and making appropriate adjustments.

- Workstation layout for neutral posture
- Organization of workday and activities
  - Breaks and micro-pauses
  - Exercises
- WorkSafeBC resources:
  - [How to make your computer workstation fit you](#)
  - [Working from home: A guide to keeping your workers healthy and safe](#)
  - [Setting up, organizing, and working comfortably in your home](#)



# Frequently asked questions

Do communicable disease plans need to be written, documented, or posted?

Can employers maintain COVID-19 protocols if they choose to?

Will masks be required?

Are there industry-specific protocols for communicable disease?

Where can employers get more information about ventilation and airflow?

See additional FAQs at [worksafebc.com/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart](https://worksafebc.com/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart).



# If you have a question or concern

## Prevention Information Line

- Workers and employers can speak to a prevention officer to get answers to questions.
- If required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.
- Call **604.276.3100** in the Lower Mainland or **1.888.621.SAFE** toll-free within B.C.

**Thank you!**

Questions?

[chris.back@worksafebc.com](mailto:chris.back@worksafebc.com)  
[consultationservices@worksafebc.com](mailto:consultationservices@worksafebc.com)