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Ambulance Paramedics Safety Bulletin

Working for our Members

APBC and your Provincial Safety Director are working every day to keep all our members safe. We are focused on obtaining and reporting the most current and accurate information from appropriate sources including the BC Ministry of Health, BCEHS and PHSA. COVID-19 information has been changing regularly, sometimes several times each day.

Use your situational awareness at all times, work as a team, work together, support each other to stay safe. We will get through this working as a team. Help to educate your crews and assist in best practices, the circumstances are clearly not the best right now that truly tests our resolve as paramedics. As front-line Health Care Workers we are under extreme pressure to bring emergent care to the vulnerable of our communities. Do the job we do with safety in mind for yourself, your crews, and the communities we protect.

Please refer to the BCEHS Handbook <https://handbook.bcehs.ca/practice-updates/> for current updates to COVID-19 and the following credible resources. BCEHS is now giving constant updated information regarding COVID-19 that can help members stay informed <https://handbook.bcehs.ca/covid-19/>.

Trusted Sources of COVID-19 Information

Public Health Agency of Canada

@CPHO_Canada (Dr. Theresa Tam) 
@GovCanHealth 
@HealthyCdns 
www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html


Government of Canada

@CanadianPM 
@Canada 
@PattyHajdu (Canada's Minister of Health)  
@CanadaAndTheWorld 
www.canada.ca/coronavirus

World Health Organization

@WHO  
www.who.int


BC Centre for Disease Control

@CDCofBC 
www.bccdc.ca

Government of British Columbia

@BCGovNews 
@AdrianDix (BC's Minister of Health) 
@BCProvincialGovernment 
@GovernmentofBC 
www.gov.bc.ca

Vancouver Coastal Health

@vchhealthcare   
www.vch.ca/COVID19

PPE

Don't forget to wear all your PPE when necessary, dress to protect! If you are getting low on stock please follow posted procedures, if you are unsure contact your supervisor. Any questions regarding what PPE to wear or how to Don & Doff correctly, please refer to your BCEHS Infection Prevention & Control Guidelines. With the equipment provided members can do the job safely.

<https://handbook.bcehs.ca/clinical-resources/infection-prevention-and-control/>

CRITICAL POINTS: Any aerosol-generating procedures MUST have all PPE equipment including face shield

REMINDER: Work your calls as a team to reduce your exposure, try steps like having only one member going into the kits. Assess all calls maintaining at least 2 meters distance to review if any concerns on contact precautions are suspected. Cocooning patients can help to contain the patient into the pack with less cross contamination. Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands! Have surgical mask ready to go to reverse isolate patients avoiding their coughing/ sneezing. Communicate well with your patient, family, and other responders explaining the importance of maintaining a mask on.

How do I decontaminate equipment and follow best practices?

BCEHS has provided step by step information to walk you through cleaning all equipment, ambulance, or aircraft; follow the link to cleaning and disinfecting.

<https://handbook.bcehs.ca/clinical-resources/infection-prevention-and-control/cleaning-and-disinfection/>

WSBC

As information about COVID-19 develops, WorkSafeBC continues to monitor the progression of the virus and refer to the guidance of public health officials.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/March/covid-19-and-the-workplace>

What are my rights, how do I report, how do I seek compensation?

Where a worker is diagnosed with COVID-19, the compensability of the worker's condition is adjudicated in accordance with Policy Item #28.00, Contagious Diseases, in the Rehabilitation Services & Claims Manual, Volume II ("RS&CM"). The policy explains that the disability is compensable where there is something in the nature of the worker's employment that had causative significance. It is a requirement for compensation that either:

1. the nature of the employment created for the worker a risk of contracting a kind of disease to which the public at large is not normally exposed; or
2. the nature of the employment created for the worker a risk of contracting the disease significantly greater than the ordinary exposure risk of the public at large.

Where the contagious disease has reached the pandemic phase, these considerations are particularly relevant. Please refer to specific examples in the policy for additional guidance.



Where a worker has been exposed to COVID-19 but not diagnosed with a disease, medical treatment for an exposure is adjudicated under Policy Item C3-12.30, Infectious Agent or Disease Exposures, of the RS&CM. The policy outlines that an exposure may be accepted as compensable itself where the following four conditions are satisfied:

1. there is objective evidence that the worker was exposed, or was very likely to have been exposed, to an infectious agent or disease;
2. the exposure arises out of and in the course of the worker's employment;
3. there is a moderate to high risk that, based on the mechanism and amount of exposure that occurred, the exposure will result in the worker developing a disease with health consequences that are so serious it may be life-threatening; and
4. the effects of the exposure can be significantly mitigated or prevented by the immediate provision of post-exposure prophylaxis.

Right to Refuse Work

Workers in B.C. have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard. In those circumstances, employers need to consider the refusal on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation. For more information, see Occupational Health and Safety [Guideline G3.12](#).

COVID-19 and the Workplace

Please refer to the most recent update from Dr. Henry in her letter to health care workers, dated March 13, 2020. As stated, our goal is to do the following while keeping ourselves safe. If you are unsure contact your supervisor:

"...To ensure we are able to provide patient care, especially to those most vulnerable, and to make sure that our health system and our health-care providers are able to care for those who become severely ill, we are asking people to self-monitor their health and to apply a low threshold when feeling unwell to stay home until they are better ..."

...Please be advised that self-isolation does not apply to health-care workers who travel outside of Canada and provide direct patient care (e.g. physicians, nurses, care aides, etc.) unless they have travelled to Hubei Province in China, Italy, or Iran.

However, all health-care providers who have travelled outside of Canada are required to self-monitor daily and use appropriate PPE when providing care. If a health-care worker develops symptoms, they should self-isolate and contact their regional medical health officer:

- *_Fraser Health – 1-604-527-4806*
- *_Interior Health – 1-866-457-5648*
- *_Norther Health – 1-250-565-2000*
- *_Vancouver Coastal – 1-604-527-4893*
- *_Island Health – 1-800-204-6166*

If a health-care provider develops symptoms while providing care, they should immediately put on a mask and finish any essential services they are providing before self-isolating..."



What do I do if I feel I've been exposed to suspected or confirmed COVID patient?

1. If you had exposure to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient and were NOT wearing BCEHS approved PPE, minimize your exposure with other people, contact your manager for direction seek Public Health Direction (811) on the need to self isolate
Note: DO NOT report exposures to [Work Place Health Call Centre](#)
2. If you have had exposure to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient and you WERE wearing the appropriate BCEHS PPE (I.e., completing a call), then you should advise your manager in writing (email for tracking) and self-monitor for any ILI symptoms that could develop
Note: Remember to wear a surgical mask around crews and patients

(Ministry of Health -Dr Henry March 13,2020)

How do I secure income if I'm self-isolated?

As directed from the employer, if you are a Full-time or Regular Part-time employee and have been directed to self-isolate by a qualified practitioner or have tested positive for COVID you will be placed on a general leave with pay. If you are an On-call employee and have the same situation as above you will be placed on general leave with pay based on an average of the preceeding three months earning.

How do I get support?


You are not alone, and there are supports here to help with your fears and concerns. APBC is urging all members to reach out to any members that are self-isolated. Call and see if they are ok, talk to them and encourage them through this difficult situation.


1. CIS- You have access to a supportive CIS peer team to help provide education, resources, CISM interventions.
CISCOORDINATORS@bcehs.ca 1-855-969-4321
2. EFAP / Homewood Health – 1-800-663-1142

Your Provincial Safety Director will bring up to date information to our members as it comes available, thank you for your continued attention to safety.

We are in this together.

Sincerely,


Corey Froese
Provincial Safety Director
Ambulance Paramedics of BC
CUPE Local 873


Robert Parkinson
Health & Wellness Director
Ambulance Paramedics of BC
CUPE Local 873

CF/RP/sd/MoveUp



IPAC & Safety Information

Full Face Shield VS Safety Glasses

Safety Glasses are not a substitute for a Full Face Shield.

Safety Glasses are designed to protect the wearer from impact projectiles / objects

NOTE:
N95 respirators are not fluid resistant and a Full Face Shield should be worn if sprays or splashes are anticipated.



*Glo powder used to simulate exposure to spray

The Full Face Shield prevents any droplets (e.g. viruses) from entering the eye mucosa.

It offers protection from exposure to infectious droplets or blood/body fluids via splash or spray

You may wear both Safety Glasses and Full Face Shield as determined by your Point of Care Risk Assessment.

