



**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES/
COVID SAFETY PLAN
JANUARY, 2022**

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1.0 Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide Gibsons & District Public Library staff with important information that is required to help prevent communicable disease.

Public Health Directives

The Provincial Health Officer is the senior public health official for B.C. and is responsible for monitoring the health of the population across the province, providing independent advice to the ministers and public officials on public health issues.

The responsibilities of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) are outlined in the *Public Health Act* and include the following:

- provide independent advice to the ministers and public officials on public health issues;
- monitor the health of the population of B.C. and advise on public health issues and on the need for legislation, policies and practices;
- recommend actions to improve the health and wellness of the population of BC;
- deliver reports that are in the public interest on the health of the population and on government's progress in achieving population health targets;
- establish standards of practice for and conduct performance reviews of Medical Health Officers; and
- work with the BC Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and BC's Medical Health Officers across the province to fulfill their legislated mandates on disease control and health protection.

GDPL is prepared to implement or maintain additional measures at times when the risk of communicable disease in our region or workplace is elevated, as advised and directed by public health. Public Health's specific guidance for a particular communicable disease will be followed.

WorkSafeBC Directives (Workers Compensation Act/OHS Regulation Requirements)

WorkSafeBC is a provincial agency dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across BC. They partner with workers and employers to prevent work-related injury, disease, and disability. Their services include education, prevention, compensation and support for injured workers, and no-fault insurance to protect employers and workers.

GDPL will meet WorkSafeBC safety standards and acknowledges that all staff have:

- the right to know about hazards in the workplace;
- the right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace; and
- the right to refuse unsafe work.

Recognize Hazards/Assess Risks

The GDPL Library Director and Health and Safety Committee will regularly assess all the hazards within our operations, and will take appropriate steps to eliminate or control the associated risk.

GDPL staff have regular contact with patrons, coworkers, and the physical environment itself (surfaces, doors, equipment etc.): during times of outbreaks, these encounters could give rise to contact with communicable diseases, if not controlled adequately.

As such, GDPL will think about the risks and take steps to control them. Such controls will include adhering to current public health orders, if applicable, public health advice, as well as implementing best practices to keep employees and patrons safe.

When selecting a safeguard or a combination of safeguards, GDPL will start at the top of the hierarchy outlined below to control the hazards

The hierarchy of controls (in order of their effectiveness):

Elimination or substitution:

The consideration of eliminating or postponing work tasks that may create a risk of exposure

Engineering controls:

The consideration of engineering controls, such as physical barriers.

Administrative controls:

The consideration of altering work practices to minimize exposure, such as physical distancing or enhanced cleaning protocols/

Personal protective equipment (PPE):

The consideration of using PPE such as gloves and face masks. Each staff person has the right to wear a mask to provide themselves with additional protection from contagions.

2.0 Stay Home When You are Sick

What Employees Should Know

All employees should stay home and follow public health recommendations.

- <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/communicable-disease-control-manual>

and

HealthlinkBC

- <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/healthlinkbc-files/category/disease-prevention>

Sickness at Work

Staff members who have symptoms upon arrival to work or become ill during the day should promptly separate themselves from others, inform the Library Director and go home.

An important way to reduce the spread of communicable diseases is to keep sick people away from those who are not sick. GDPL will communicate their sick leave policies and practices to employees every year before flu season and any time when there is a risk of a communicable disease. All employees are advised to stay home if they have any symptoms of being sick until at least 24 hours after their fever & all symptoms are gone without the use of fever-reducing, cough suppressant or other medicines.

3.0 Cleaning

Personal Hygiene/Cleaning

Depending on the communicable disease, it's possible for people to become infected if they touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes. The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to wash your hands. Washing your hands often and practicing good hand hygiene will reduce the chances of getting or spreading germs. Washing your hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is most effective. This is because soap actively destroys the surface of the some viruses and a soapy lather really reduces the number of germs left on your skin. Alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to disinfect your hands when soap and water are not available.

Other things to consider:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough instead of your hands.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Avoid unnecessary contact
- Consider physical distancing
- Wear a mask

Facility, Vehicle and Equipment Hygiene

Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can also reduce the risk of infection.

Always follow standard practices and appropriate regulations specific to your type of facility for minimum standards for cleaning and disinfection. This guidance is indicated for buildings in community settings and is **not** intended for [healthcare settings](#) or for [other facilities](#) where specific regulations or practices for cleaning and disinfection may apply. Additionally, this guidance only applies to cleaning and disinfection practices to prevent the spread of exposures. It does not apply to any cleaning or disinfection needed to prevent the spread of other germs.

Cleaning

Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and decreases risk of infection from surfaces.

When confirmed or suspected communicable disease cases are low, [cleaning once a day is usually enough](#) to sufficiently remove germs that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility. GDPL will surface clean once a day. More frequent cleaning will be considered if there is an increased risk of communicable disease spread in our community, and the following factors will be considered in regards to the cleaning schedule:

- [Reportable Disease Data Dashboard](#)
- [BC COVID Dashboard](#) in your community;
- Low vaccination rates in your community;
- Infrequent use of other prevention measures, such as hand hygiene; or
- The space is occupied by people at increased risk for severe illness...

4.0 Ventilation

For all activities that take place indoors, basic principles of good indoor air quality include supplying outdoor air to replenish indoor air, thereby removing and diluting contaminants that naturally accumulate in indoor settings, especially in well-sealed buildings.

- GDPL will ensure preventative maintenance is conducted on its HVAC system (for example, regular filter changes and inspection of critical components).
- GDPL will make sure the system is properly balanced, which means verifying that the system meets its design conditions for air flow, temperature, pressure drop, noise and vibration.
- GDPL will consider limiting occupancy of the library during periods of communicable disease outbreaks.

5.0 Promotion of Employee Vaccinations

The Gibsons & District Public Library will support Public Health messaging for vaccinations against pandemic or communicable diseases and may collaborate with Public Health to offer vaccination clinics in public facilities.

The Gibsons & District Public Library recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs to reduce illness, disability and death from community acquired diseases. Programs may be created to encourage employee participation in public health vaccination programs.

Reasons to get Vaccinated.

1. **Vaccine-preventable diseases have not gone away**
The viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death still exist and can be passed on to those who are not protected by vaccines.
2. **Vaccines will help keep you healthy**
Vaccines can prevent short term illnesses and prevent long term chronic disability or increased risk of cancer depending on disease.
3. **Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise**
Like eating healthy foods, exercising, and getting regular check-ups, vaccines play a vital role in keeping you healthy. Vaccines are one of the most convenient and safest preventive care measures available.
4. **Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death**
Vaccine-preventable infections can be deadly. Example: Every year in the US, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 50,000 adults died from vaccine-preventable diseases.
5. **Vaccines are safe**
Potential side effects associated with vaccines are uncommon and much less severe than the diseases they prevent.
6. **Vaccines will not cause the diseases they are designed to prevent**
Vaccines contain either killed or weakened viruses, making it impossible to get the disease from the vaccine.
7. **Young and healthy people can get very sick, too**
Infants and older adults are at increased risk for serious infections and complications, but vaccine-preventable diseases can strike anyone. If you are young and healthy, getting vaccinated can help you stay that way.
8. **Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive**
Diseases not only have a direct impact on individuals and their families, but also carry a high price tag for society as a whole.
9. **When you get sick, your children, grandchildren, and parents may be at risk, too**
Adults are the most common source of pertussis (whooping cough) infection in infants which can be deadly for babies. When you get vaccinated, you are protecting yourself and your family as well as those in your community who may not be able to be vaccinated.
10. **Your family and co-workers need you**
Millions of adults get sick from vaccine-preventable diseases, causing them to miss work and leaving them unable to care for those who depend on them, including their children and/or aging parents.

Under PHO of January 2022, the following protocols will be enforced in the library:

11. Proof of vaccination is NOT REQUIRED to visit the library
12. Proof of vaccination is required for in-person adult programs
13. Proof of vaccination is required for caregivers age 22 and older attending child & youth programs. (Not required for child & youth participants.)
14. Masks are mandatory for everyone 5+

