

Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

March 2020

Working During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has put significant pressure on all industries, including forestry. Companies that are continuing to operate have had to make significant adjustments to ensure the health and safety of their employees. This Safety Alert will outline some considerations for companies and workers during this time and provide credible links to valuable resources.

Considerations for all workers

- Any medical aid incident during this time will put additional stress on the medical system, potentially increasing wait time for treatment or the risk of complications. Reduce risk by improving controls and looking out for one another.
- Follow all hygiene **best practices** from trustworthy sources like the public health agencies and the World Health Organization (WHO). This includes handwashing and regular workstation cleaning. Don't share PPE, food, cigarettes/vapes, phones/tablets or tools.
- Maintain social distance while working. Keep two meters (6 feet) from other people wherever possible. When travelling, reduce the number of people in the vehicle. During crew transport, keep windows open and consider wearing protective equipment.
- If you feel sick, report to your supervisor immediately. Know the symptoms and act quickly.
- Practice social isolation/social distancing during days off.

Considerations for employers

- Brief workers on expectations and enforce them.
- Set up wash stations and make sure there are enough cleaning and hygiene supplies. Allow for extra time for cleaning and travel.
- Educate key staff, including supervisors and first aiders, of appropriate measures for COVID-19. Supply additional PPE if required. Refer anyone with COVID-19 symptoms to a medical health professional. If COVID-19 is identified in your workplace, work with the local health authority and take appropriate steps.
- When conducting drills and training, focus on activities that don't require workers to come in close physical contact with each other. Stop all gatherings of large numbers of people.
- Have a plan for shortages of critical staff. Cross train workers to be able to cover sick/quarantined staff; but don't compromise safety.
- Reduce the number of workers per room in accommodations, aiming for one person per room if possible.



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For the latest information on COVID-19, visit:

- World Health Organization: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
- Public Health Agency of Canada: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
- BC Center for Disease Control: [www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

Industry Alerts

- Western Forestry Contractor's Association (WFCA) COVID-19 Pandemic Guidelines for Silviculture, Wildfire and Contracting Camps & Crews: wfca.ca/2020/03/wfca-covid-19-draft-guidelines/
- Interfor – Hazard Mitigation: Machine Workstation Hygiene: www.bcforestsafe.org/node/3465
- BC Forest Safety Council - COVID-19 (coronavirus): Protect yourself, co-workers, friends and family from respiratory illness: www.bcforestsafe.org/node/3457
- BCFSC's Response to COVID-19: www.bcforestsafe.org/files/BCFSC-COVID-19.pdf

Useful information and resource links for workplace information:

- Resources for small businesses affected by Coronavirus: <https://smallbusinessbc.ca/article/resources-for-small-businesses-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- How to apply for COVID-19 EI sickness benefits: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/apply.html>
- Know The Facts about COVID-19: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/about-coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
- How to Be Prepared: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-be-prepared-infographic.html
- How to Isolate At Home: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-how-to-isolate-at-home.html
- Reduce the Spread – Wash Your Hands: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands.html
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) Pandemic Resources: www.ccohs.ca/topics/hazards/health/pandemics/#ctgt_wb-auto-3

