

Fort St. James Public Library Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, measles, and seasonal influenza.¹ This plan is designed to help reduce the risk of transmission and illness among Fort St. James Public Library patrons and staff.

Diseases can be transmitted through various means, including coughing, sneezing, and surface contamination. These steps are designed to address each of these issues and how to avoid passing on the disease in the library.

1.0 Stay Home When You Are Sick

- 1) Staff should stay home if they have symptoms of a communicable disease, such as fever or chills, coughing, diarrhea, or vomiting. Seek medical attention if necessary and avoid traveling if possible, unless instructed otherwise by medical professionals.
- 2) Self-isolate until 24 hours after your symptoms are resolved.
 - During flu season, self-isolate 24 hours after your fever is gone without the aid of fever-reducing medication, or after your symptoms have resolved.
- 3) Staff should stay home if they live with someone who is self-isolating because they either have a confirmed diagnosis or are showing symptoms related to a communicable disease.
- 4) If you feel unsafe coming to work but do not fit the descriptions in parts 1 to 3, and your work duties have not been suspended, you can choose to not come to work by:
 - Taking paid leave by using your available sick leave bank or vacation leave, or
 - Taking unpaid leave.
- 5) If staff become sick while at work, they should immediately inform the Library Director or other supervisor or Library Board chair if the Director is not available. If they are unable to leave, they should wear a mask and remain 6f/2m apart from staff and patrons to lower the risk of passing on their infection. They should avoid touching any surfaces, and should leave work as soon as possible.
- 6) In the case of community transmission events (e.g., COVID-19c, flu outbreak), staff should follow public health recommendations from the BC CDC:
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/communicable-disease-control-manual> and Health Link BC
<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/healthlinkbc-files/category/disease-prevention>

¹ BC Municipal Safety Association, “Communicable Disease Prevention: A Guide for Employers”, <https://www.bcmsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/communicable-disease-prevention-guide-for-employers-pdf-en-4.pdf>

2.0 Managing Risk of Transmission

Depending on the communicable disease, it is possible for people to become infected if they touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes.² According to current provincial guidelines, masks are recommended for staff and patrons who have not been fully vaccinated against COVID-19³. It is expected that non-vaccinated staff will wear a mask while at work. Staff **must not** ask patrons for their vaccination status.

- 1) When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or if unable to, cough/sneeze into the crease of your elbow instead of your hands. If you do use your hands, wash them immediately after.
- 2) Staff should frequently wash their hands for the recommended 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer when unable to wash their hands. This should be done:
 - When you arrive at work
 - Before and after going on a break
 - After using the washroom
 - After handling cash or other materials that have come into contact with the public
 - Before and after handling shared tools and equipment
 - Before and after using masks or other personal protective equipment
- 3) Hand sanitizer bottles are available at each staff computer for staff use, and on the wall by the entrance for patron use.
- 4) Do not share food, drinks, utensils, or anything else that has been in contact with your mouth.

3.0 Hygiene/Cleaning

It is possible to contract a communicable disease from contact with an unclean surface. Anything that needs to be wiped clean should be done so with the cloth and water/bleach mix kept at the front desk, or with the alcohol wipes if unable to use the mix. Gloves are also available at the front desk should staff require an extra layer of protection when cleaning.

- 1) Staff should wipe down their computer station (keyboard, mouse, desk top) at the end of their shift.
- 2) Public computers should be wiped down at the end of each day, or if possible, after each patron.
- 3) Returns should be wiped down (covers, DVD cases) before reshelving.
- 4) Any high-touch surfaces (e.g., door handles, automatic door buttons) should be wiped down at the end of each shift.

² BC Forest Safety, "Sample template of a Communicable Disease Prevention Plan", <https://www.bcforestsafety.org/communicable-disease-prevention/>

³ Government of British Columbia, "Province-wide restrictions", <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions#masks>

- 5) Staff should change out the reusable cloths daily. Cloths should be washed at least once every two weeks or when needed.
- 6) Library cleaners clean the library three days a week after closing.

4.0 Elevated community transmission events

- 1) During elevated community transmission events, the library will adhere to public health and WorkSafe BC guidance. The library will take a phased approach to providing services and public access to its physical location. Procedures may include:
 - Limited or no access to the library by patrons or staff.
 - Limited or no access to public washrooms.
 - Limited number of patrons allowed in the library at one time.
 - Limited number of items allowed out by patrons.
 - Increased cleaning/wiping down procedures by cleaners and staff.
 - The required use of masks and hand sanitizer by anyone wanting to come into the library.
 - Required social distancing by patrons and staff.
 - Quarantining returned items.
- 2) During a provincial state of emergency, regular work duties may be suspended for some or all staff. If this happens, staff can request that a record of employment be issued so they can apply for federal and/or provincial relief benefits.
- 3) Details about changes to the library will be made via the library website and Facebook page, and will be posted in the library building.
- 4) The Library Director will inform staff when they can safely return to work.