

COVID-19 Proposed Protocols for the NPAFC Secretariat Office

Date of Revision: June 30, 2020

The following are final protocols for the NPAFC Secretariat to consider in order to implement workplace guidelines recommended by Minister Bruce Ralston in his May 13, 2020 presentation to Consular Corps of B.C. in regard maintaining the ongoing health and safety of staff and British Columbians during the current COVID-19 pandemic. These protocols will be revisited in the coming months as updates to the pandemic are received.

Bolded are the guidelines from Minister Ralston and the draft protocols or considerations for drafting a protocol are below each guideline.

Guidelines for Organizations and Public Institutions

The Ralston presentation noted that we have a number of tools in our tool kit to modify to reduce transmission risk in our office: contact intensity (how close you are to someone and for how long); and number of contacts (how many people in same setting at same time). These include:

- Physical distancing measures –to reduce density of people
- Engineering controls –physical barriers, increased ventilation
- Administrative controls –rules and guidelines
- Non-medical masks

We have considered these in developing the protocols.

CORE WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

1. Actively promote and monitor personal self care actions in your organization.

Staff are expected to respect the following guidelines for Personal Self Care and for Managing Social interaction. These guidelines will be distributed by email to all staff and will be posted at the entrance. Mistakes will happen. In the spirit of maintaining the health of everyone, staff should raise any concern about any activity or interaction immediately.

Guidelines for Personal Self Care

No hand shaking; practice good hygiene (*frequent hand washing*); maintain reasonable physical distance when out; if you have symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 you must stay home; if you are at greater risk get informed.

From Ralston May 13, 2020 presentation – added frequent hand washing note

Guidelines for Managing Social Interaction

Clear policy for not socializing when you have symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19; maintain regular social contact with extended family or small groups of (around 2-6 guests) while maintaining a safe physical distance.

From Ralston May 13, 2020 presentation

Actively promote and implement core measures for managing social interaction in your organizational setting in congregate social areas (kitchens, staff rooms, canteens, shared public spaces).

- a) Entrance to building, elevator and office main door : The building management has posted COVID protocols throughout the building (attached) that request you practice social distancing at all times. In addition, they require that
- Only two persons are allowed in the elevator at one time
 - Everyone should wear a mask in common areas (if possible)

They note that additional daily cleaning of surfaces in common areas is being done throughout the building.

NPAFC staff to wipe down door handles after visitor leaves.

- b) Common areas – any area outside offices with doors. Staff are recommended to wear masks when social distancing (2 m) is not possible.
- c) Offices –two people can meet in an office as long as 2m distancing is maintained.
- d) Kitchen – one person at a time in the kitchen and surfaces must be wiped down after each use.
- e) Meetings: ALL meetings of more than two people must be held virtually.

- f) Bathroom: The bathrooms are a high risk area and are not large enough to allow social distancing, so it is recommended that staff wear masks. Staff will have individual washroom keys cut and common keys will be disinfected after each use.
- g) Workstations: The current office arrangement does not allow for proper physical distancing measures between workstations. Additionally, high traffic areas will concentrate people in close proximity of one another as they pass by to use common areas such as the bathroom or kitchen. The office layout will be assessed to determine how best workspaces can be arranged to maintain at least 2 m distance between everyone.
- h) Conference Room: The conference room may be used as an additional workstation, if necessary. If it is being used as a workstation, it should not be used to host meetings. If the conference room is not in use as a workstation, any meetings should be with no more than 2 people at a time. Staff and partner meetings should continue to be held virtually.
- i) Protective equipment: The Commission will provide cleaning/disinfection equipment

2. Ensure that individuals who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, including any coughing or sneezing, do not come into the workplace.

Staff are required to stay home if they have ANY cold, flu or COVID-19 symptom. If they come to work, they will be asked to return home. Any surfaces they contacted will be disinfected.

3. Require and sustain higher levels of frequent cleaning of “high touch” areas in workplaces and retail outlets throughout the day and availability of hand sanitizers stands at entrances or around workplaces and shops.

- a) Provide sanitizer and sanitizing materials at the central counter and in the kitchen
- b) Staff to wipe down common areas after each personal use.
- c) Daily cleaning of the office by cleaning staff is being done, and “deep cleaning” once per week is to be discussed by DFO with landlord.

4. Where appropriate and practical, increase use of temporary physical barriers (such as plexiglass at service counters or checkouts).

Packages should be left on or picked up from the counter in the reception area with the person assigned to work at the front desk maintaining 2 m distance from the counter. Packages should be unpacked using one-time use latex gloves to reduce risk of transmission.

Additional Guidelines for Offices

5. Where possible, continue to encourage working from home part of the time to reduce “contact intensity” and “number of contacts” in the workplace.

Healthy staff are requested to work from home if physical presence in the office is not required. Decision is made by supervisor with Executive Director’s approval.

6. Where this is not possible or in addition to working from home policies, enable employees to have less contacts by suggestions that include:

- a. Using staggered shifts or work hours for individuals or groups.**
- b. Teams working together virtually or small team task groups.**
- c. Forgoing in person group meetings as much as possible.**

Public transit is used by the majority of the staff to get to and from the office each day. During rush hours, public transit is crowded, and physical distancing measure cannot be adhered to. This increases staff exposure and risks of bringing disease into the office. If possible, staff should maintain physical distancing recommendations during their commute by avoiding public transit during these peak hours. This could be achieved by staff taking advantage of flexible working time (Memo A16-01) that allows working 7.5 hours between 7 am and 7 pm. The hours should be agreed upon with their supervisor. Masks are recognized now as offering some protection when social distancing is not possible.

Other considerations:

- 1. Process for modifying the guidelines:** Any concerns or ideas for modification of the protocols can be raised at our weekly staff meeting. Private concerns can be raised with your supervisor or with the Executive Director.
- 2. Returning to the office:** Currently, the government recommends that people continue working from home when possible to keep risk of exposure and contact low. Until that changes staff will continue to work remotely with an option to return at their discretion, with permission from their supervisor. Return to work should be organized by such a manner that allows avoiding a social distancing violation.
- 3. Sick Leave Policy:**
Standard sick leave policies apply to illness resulting from COVID-19.

Period of validity

This protocol will be revised after receiving new recommendations/guidelines/policies from the relevant authorities including the Office of Protocol, Government of BC, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Staff will be informed on any change by Executive Director or his designate.

Useful links:

WorksafeBC

<https://as-wsbcprocd-01.azurewebsites.net/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation>

BC Centre for Disease Control

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Government of BC Orders, Notices & Guidance

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Government of Canada – Covid-19 info

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>