 District of Sooke	Policy Title: Return to Work Plan During COVID-19 Pandemic	Policy No: AD-009
	Authority: CAO	Classification: Human Resources
	Date Adopted: May 13, 2020	Motion No: N/A
Historical Changes:		

Special Background:

The District of Sooke (District) has developed a Return to Work Plan (Plan) now that the pandemic curve is flattening. This Plan represents the minimum standards that employers must meet based on the information from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), the Ministry of Health, the Province of BC and WorkSafe BC. The District will continue to take direction from the advice of the PHO and the Provincial Government. How the District interacts with the public will change.

To develop this Plan, a hazard analysis was completed based on the “Hierarchy of Controls for COVID-19” as recommended by the PHO. This framework addresses Physical Distancing followed by Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls and lastly, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce transmission. The application of these control measures will assist in mitigating potential hazards to maintain a safe workplace.

Hazard Analysis:

HAZARDS	CONTROL	MITIGATION
<i>CONSIDER: Health and safety, damage to people, property, equipment or program/the 5 categories of hazards; biological, physical, ergonomic, chemical, and psycho-social.</i>		
<p>During the pandemic response, there is a risk of transmission whenever people come into contact with one another, share close physical space, and touch common surfaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical: touching surfaces that are potentially contaminated with coronavirus particles • Biological: inadvertent exposure to a viral contagion or inadvertent contamination of a shared workspace or common area with easily transmissible viral particles 	Physical*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage should be installed regarding physical distancing including visual cues (“step” stickers) for areas where customers are required to queue. • Common areas (public and employee) should be arranged to allow for physical distancing. • Alternative solutions to conducting business meetings should be considered • Cleaning/disinfecting procedures for workspace, shared workspaces and common areas including vehicles to reduce surfaces that may potentially be contaminated with coronavirus particles, should be considered

HAZARDS	CONTROL	MITIGATION
<p><u>Biological</u>: inadvertent exposure to a viral contagion or inadvertent contamination of a shared workspace or common area with easily transmissible viral particles by an employee who is carrying or showing symptoms of COVID-19.</p>	<p>Engineering (i.e. Renovations)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some workspaces may require physical barriers installed • Workspaces that are shared between two (2) or more employees may be re-arranged to accommodate physical distancing or may require further steps of action to ensure physical distancing • Provide means for the general public to provide payment with minimal or no contact with staff • Place hand sanitizer station near entrance doors, pay station and other high touch locations for customers and employees • Remove lids from garbage receptacles to allow “no-touch” disposal
<p>Pandemic-related hazards include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Physical</u>: touching surfaces that are potentially contaminated with coronavirus particles • <u>Biological</u>: inadvertent exposure to a viral contagion or inadvertent contamination of a shared workspace or common area with easily transmissible viral particles • <u>Chemical</u>: exposure to disinfectants/nitrile or latex gloves/environmental sensitivities • <u>Psycho-social</u>: mental distress/anxiety 	<p>Administrative</p>	<p>Provide a Policy and/or a Procedure which address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-monitoring • Guidance on document handling • Cleaning/disinfecting procedures • Signage • Business Meeting Protocols (for both off-site and on-site) • Stress, anxiety and mental health awareness • Proper hygiene practices
<p>Biological and Chemical (as above)</p>	<p>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*</p>	<p>Note: information regarding use of PPE will be addressed by administrative policy and procedure</p>
<p>*Note: Fire fighters responding to emergencies for possible or confirmed COVID-19 emergencies will follow departmental directives, plans and BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) guidance. Fire fighters will also continue to wear PPE appropriate to the risk, and in accordance with BCEHS and PHO direction.</p>		

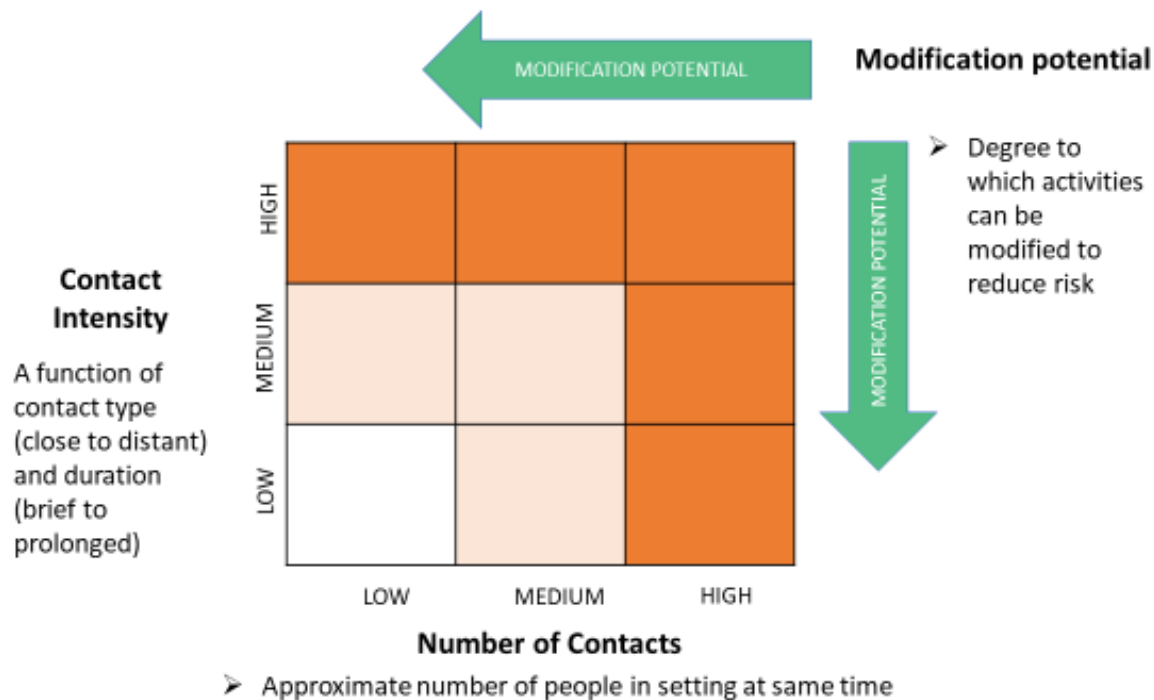
The District has focused on non-PPE controls being put in place, specifically physical distancing. Most District employees will not require PPE for protection against coronavirus unless they are in specific situations such as cleaning public washrooms or treating wastewater.

A large portion of the Plan relies on the implementation of the associated operating procedure which contains more details in respect to the controls listed in the table.

To address COVID-19 health and safety concerns in the workplace, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), or Managers as directed by the CAO, will be communicating updates in respect to the pandemic response and any changes to necessary steps or actions required.

Risk Matrix:

The risk of transmission in organizational settings and public institutions is subject to two variables that we need to modify to reduce transmission risk: contact intensity (how close you are to someone and for how long); number of contacts (how many people are in the same setting at the same time).



Modifying from high to low can be based on a range of actions:

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

Purpose:

To provide guidance for employees returning back to work during the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, including exempt staff and Council, CUPE and IAFF members, committee members and volunteers.

Principles:

1. STAYING INFORMED

- a) Employees are encouraged to stay up-to-date and informed on the pandemic and follow public health advice, as information may change from time to time. Links can be found in the Related Publications section of this document.

2. SELF MONITORING:

- a) Pre-mitigation, including reporting and self-screening, will help to identify possible COVID-19 positive employees and proactively remove risks that they could inadvertently introduce coronavirus into the workplace.
- b) Employees with COVID-19 symptoms **must** stay home and not come to work for at least ten (10) days, or longer if symptoms have not resolved. As per Healthline BC, after your ten (10) to fourteen (14) day self-isolation, you may return to your regular activities if:
 - i. At least ten (10) days have passed since any symptoms started, and
 - ii. Your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications (i.e. Tylenol, Advil), and
 - iii. You are feeling better (there is improvement in runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue). Coughing may go on for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean you need to continue to self-monitor and self-isolate, or
 - iv. You were self-monitoring and never developed any symptoms.
- c) Employees **must** also stay at home when sick to avoid spreading illness to others, even if symptoms are not consistent with COVID-19, as you may be non-symptomatic.

3. PHYSICAL DISTANCING:

- a) Physical distancing reduces the potential of coronavirus being transmitted through airborne droplets. There is a possibility that even non-symptomatic carriers of coronavirus may transmit the virus in this manner, so physical distancing should always be observed, even in cases when people do not display symptoms of COVID-19.
- b) Access to District workplaces should be limited and alternative methods, such as video or conference calls, be used for conducting business to prevent close personal contact
- c) Lunchrooms, break rooms, boardroom, reception and common areas will be arranged to follow physical distancing practices. However, employees are discouraged from using these areas whenever possible.
- d) Employees should remain on their primary work floor and not visit other floors in the building unless absolutely necessary. Fire department staff should access the lounge and kitchen through the back stairwell. All other staff should access Council Chambers via the main stairwell. Use of the third floor kitchen and lounge is restricted to Fire Department staff.
- e) Whenever possible, employees should travel alone in vehicles to ensure physical distancing.
- f) Should a task require close personal contact, appropriate PPE and additional mitigation measures should be considered and discussed with your manager.
- g) Only essential business travel should be considered until further notice.
- h) If there are cases where, in a shared workspace, physical distancing cannot be maintained, a more comprehensive risk assessment should be undertaken in collaboration with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). Consideration should be given to the type of task(s), and whether there are alternatives.

4. PERSONAL HYGIENE (please refer to Operating Procedure OP-22):

- a) Employees should practice proper “hand hygiene” techniques often, as it is the single-most effective way of reducing the spread of infection.
- b) Proper *respiratory etiquette* should also be followed.
- c) Touching your face, including eyes, nose or mouth should be avoided and hands washed or sanitized following such touching.

5. ENHANCED CLEANING/DISINFECTING:

- a) Since janitorial services are provided (four (4) evenings a week for Municipal Hall and once weekly for Fire Halls 1 and 2); employees should disinfect common areas and other high touch surfaces before use.
- b) Employees should ensure regularly touched surfaces are disinfected frequently within their own workspace(s). Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in Operating Procedure OP-22.

6. SHARED WORKSPACES/EQUIPMENT INCLUDING VEHICLES:

- a) Employees are discouraged from sharing equipment (i.e. pens, phones, other tools).
- b) The need to share workspaces and equipment will be minimized.
- c) When it is necessary to use a common workstation or piece of equipment, such as photocopiers or cash registers, the surface should be disinfected before and after use. If you are in doubt about the cleanliness of an area or item, employees are encouraged to disinfect the area or item before and after use to reduce the risk of contamination.
- d) In the event of a potential COVID case in a shared workspace, workstation or with a person using shared equipment, the station/equipment should not be used until a *deep clean* can be performed which is to be delegated by the employee’s manager. Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the Operating Procedure OP-22. Employees affected by the deep clean will be accommodated to ensure safety during the cleaning period, which will be delegated by your manager.
- e) Limit the exchange of papers. If documents must be exchanged, follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the Operating Procedure OP-22.
- f) Employees who use municipal vehicles must ensure that high contact surfaces within the vehicle are routinely disinfected. Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the Operating Procedure OP-22.

7. PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- a) Facial masks and gloves are not mandatory. Facial masks have been recommended for essential health service workers only. If an employee chooses to use a facial mask, they are responsible for supplying their own, for proper disposal or frequent cleaning of them, dependent on which type they choose to utilize.
- b) Gloves will be provided and while gloves may provide protection for your hands, they do not prevent of the transfer of coronavirus to other surfaces. Frequent hand washing is mandatory even when wearing gloves.
- c) Firefighters will adhere to PPE requirements as specified by BCEHS and shall include fit-tested N95 mask, face shield, and nitrile gloves at a minimum. If COVID-19 symptoms are present, responders shall also wear a non-permeable gown in addition to N95 mask, face shield, and nitrile gloves. Proper PPE donning and doffing procedures, and disposal of PPE shall be followed.

8. STRESS/ANXIETY/MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

- a) Practice self-care. emotional stress, anxiety or concern is natural under the present circumstances. Anyone who feels they are experiencing negative mental health implications should seek assistance as soon as possible.

Documentation and training:

- 1) The Head of Human Resources will train municipal hall employees on the policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
- 2) The Fire Chief, or designate, will train Fire Department employees on the policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
- 3) If employees have any concerns, they may discuss them with their managers or with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC).

Schedule for Returning to Work:

All employees are expected to return to the office and their regular work schedule on Monday May 25, 2020 unless they have an alternate agreement approved by their supervisor and CAO. Employees may have concerns with returning to work (i.e. family care, setup of office equipment or may require some other form of accommodation) and should contact their manager immediately to discuss return to work options.

Limited access to District Hall by the public is expected to commence Monday June 1, 2020 to accommodate tax payments and applications until necessary distancing and/or separation measures are in place.

References:

Policy Number:	AD-09
Policy Owner:	Chief Administrative Officer
Endorsed by:	Leadership
Final Approval:	Chief Administrative Officer
Date Approved:	May 13, 2020
Review Date:	At the discretion of the CAO during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as advice from the Provincial, National and World Health Organizations becomes available.
Revision Date:	
Related Policies, Procedures, Schedules:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work from Home Policy• Safe Work Procedure – Pandemic Response OP
Related Publications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WorkSafeBC• BC Centre for Disease Control• Provincial Government of BC

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