

COVID-19 Recovery

Public Health and Infection Control Key Principles & Safety Plan

Staff Gatherings for Long Term Care Settings

Updated: Dec 15, 2021

Please note that VCH is taking the necessary precautions to provide the best possible care in a safe environment for our residents, visitors, staff and medical staff. Everyone needing care, regardless of COVID-19 status, is welcomed at VCH.

Please follow Public Health guidelines and Infection Prevention & Control principles when preparing your area of work. For more information, please visit <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19> or the IPAC website at <http://ipac.vch.ca/Pages/Emerging-Issues.aspx>.

This guidance document is only to be followed when there is NO outbreak in the home, in the event of an outbreak follow restrictions in accordance with advice **and direction from the local Medical Health Officer.**

Please note: amendments to this document will occur as COVID-19 recovery phases evolve.

Name of Facility:	
Address:	
Date of Creation / Last Review:	

To create your COVID-19 Key Principles & Safety Plan, please follow the instructions below:

- Review each of the element in this document with a JOHSC member/safety representative or if not available with a frontline staff member.
- Within the coloured box mark **"Y"** if the facility/department/program plan to implement the recommendation and N/A if not applicable. Complete any check boxes or blank fields as required. Provide brief comments to describe the implementation at your site. *You may refer to other documents with more detail where applicable.*

Examples:

Facility Staff/Medical Staff/Volunteers should be encouraged to clean and disinfect their own work space following the IPAC Guidelines .	Y
Facility Staff/Medical Staff/Volunteers should be encouraged to clean and disinfect their own work space following the IPAC Guidelines .	N/A

- Communicate your safety plan to your team and post in an area that is easily accessible. **The safety plan must be posted as per the PHO order (i.e. on the OHS Board).**
- For owned and operated VCH/PHC sites, a copy of the completed Key Principles & Safety Plan must be sent to EmployeeSafety@vch.ca to retain as a record.

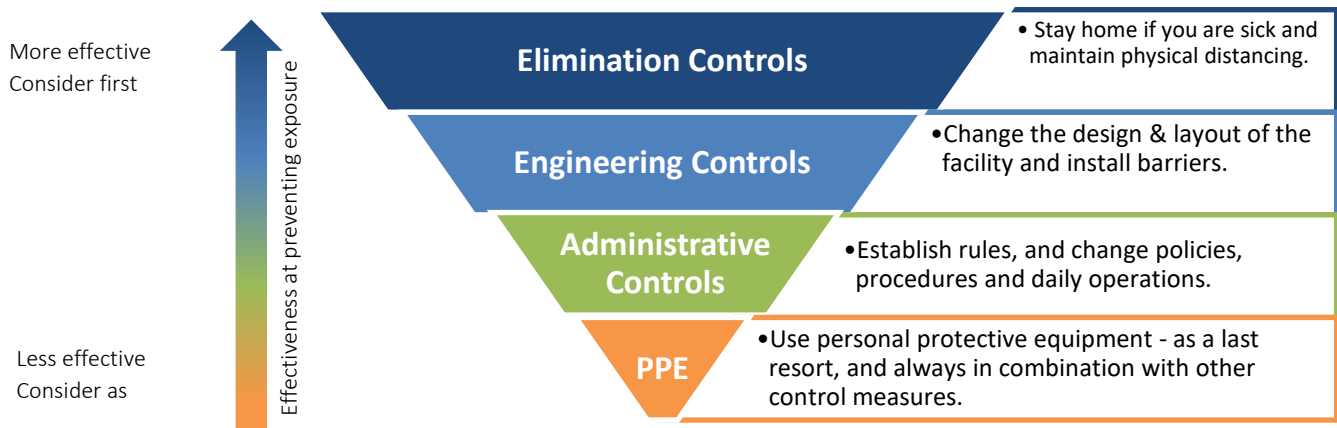
Quick Reference:

1. **General Considerations to Support Staff Gatherings**
2. **Gathering Space**
3. **Staff**
4. **Food Safety**

One part of developing your COVID-19 Safety Plan is identifying protocols to keep workers safe. Consider the elements below as you develop the plan for your workplace.

These elements are not a list of requirements; however, they should be considered and implemented to the extent that they address the risks your workplace. You may need to identify and implement additional protocols if the protocols suggested here do not sufficiently address the risk to your workers.

The elements have been divided into leveled measures of precautions each having an increasing level of effectiveness. Please refer to the color legend below:



1. General Considerations to Support Staff Gatherings

Please note: Any Public Health Orders currently in place supersedes all recommendations below (to view orders, visit the [Government of BC website](#) to view the most up to date orders).

Staff holiday gatherings should follow the [VCH Best Practice Guidelines for decorations, costumes, food, celebrations and donations](#).

Staff holiday gatherings should follow the [Tips for Safe and Joyful Celebrations](#).

Staff holiday gatherings that occur off VCH property should follow [Provincial Health Officer orders for Gatherings and Events](#).

In the event of an outbreak, a staff gathering/celebration is not permitted in the Long-Term Care (LTC) home.

The LTC home must have adequate space to accommodate a staff gathering/celebration.

Social events and gatherings are permitted to include staff and residents together across multiple floors/units of the facility. Families and visitors are not allowed to these gatherings.

As per the [Provincial Health Officer order for Gatherings and Events dated November 16, 2021](#) – dancing is not permitted and “dance floors are closed with physical barriers or occupied with tables, unless they are use for a dance performance” (pg. 11)

LTC homes should continue to follow the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 infection Control: Guidance for Long-Term Care and Seniors’ Assisted Living Settings](#) and when planning staff gatherings/celebrations.

2. Gathering Space

If the gathering/celebration is a “staff only” event, site leadership should appoint a space within the care home that is not accessible by residents.

Room capacity is determined by the site leadership following the most recent public health guidance. The space should comfortably respect personal space and provide enough seating for all staff.

[Health Canada approved cleaning/disinfecting products with a drug identification \(DIN\) number](#) are available at all tables where food is being prepared, served and/or consumed

Furniture provided in the designated gathering space will be non-porous and is easily cleaned and disinfected.

The designated gathering space will be cleaned and disinfected before and after the gathering (e.g. all horizontal surfaces, chairs, high touch points).

Hand sanitizer will be provided in the following locations:

- Event entrance
- Table where food service is occurring
- Tables where staff are consuming food/beverage

Signage is posted within the space to remind staff to perform hand hygiene:

- Upon entry and exit to the room
- Prior to eating
- After using the washroom

Masks are available in the gathering space for staff use.

A large garbage receptacle is placed in the room and emptied at the end of the event.

During the event, the door must remain closed except for access to the washroom.

If washroom facilities are available outside the “staff only” space and access is encountered by travelling through common spaces where residents are present, staff must don a new medical mask to travel to the washroom.	
---	--

3. Staff	
All staff should undergo active screening upon entry into the care home as per MoH guidelines.	
<p>Staff should not attend a gathering/celebration with COVID-19-like symptoms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If staff develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at the gathering, they should perform hand hygiene, don a medical mask, notify their manager/site leader, and leave the gathering. • Testing is strongly recommended, and timing for return to work will be determined by Public Health. 	
<p>Hand hygiene is performed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon entry/exit to the home • Upon entry to the celebration space • Prior to consuming food/beverage • After using the washroom • Before and after donning PPE 	
<p>A medical mask is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon entry and exit to the care home and while travelling through common clinical spaces to reach the celebration area • Upon leaving the celebration area to access the washroom • When not eating or drinking • For individuals who are providing food and beverage service 	
Staff must follow respiratory etiquette, including cover cough and sneeze and avoid touching the face, mouth, nose, eyes and mask. Perform hand hygiene if mask is touched/removed/adjusted.	

4. Food Safety	
Food safety requirements should be followed.	
Site leadership should ensure food safe practices are observed including, protecting foods from contamination, minimizing direct handling of food, preventing cross-contamination of foods and discarding food that may be contaminated with coughs or sneezes. Please see the BCCDC website on food safety .	
<p>Food is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually packaged for each staff member • Individually plated by a single individual appointed for food and beverage service 	
All staff are expected to perform hand hygiene prior to accessing or consuming food or beverages.	
Food is laid out in such a manner that staff can pick up individually packaged/plated food without touching surrounding food.	
Leftover food is discarded at the end of the event.	

5. Other elements implemented (*as applicable*)