

## Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre

### COVID-19 Volunteer & Nature Centre Event, Rental & Programs Protocol

February 2022

This staff/volunteer policy is aimed at reducing the risk of transmission of Covid-19 based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the BC Centre for Disease Control, Public Health Office (PHO), Worksafe BC and the BC and Recreation and Parks Sector (BCRPA).

#### How Covid spreads

The Nature Centre has based the following policy on recent guidance from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) and the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).

COVID-19 spreads from an infected but not necessarily symptomatic person to others through respiratory droplets and aerosols (smaller droplets that stay air born longer and travel further). Both are created when an infected person breathes, talks, sings, shouts, coughs, or sneezes.

If you are in contact with an infected person, the virus can enter your body through your nose, eyes, or throat. Even though COVID-19 can survive for varying lengths of time on different surfaces, infection from contact with contaminated surfaces appears to be rare. The most common type of spread is through contact with the respiratory droplets or aerosols from an infected person.

Getting immunized, staying home when sick, visiting others outdoors in small groups with appropriate distancing, wearing masks<sup>1</sup> in indoor public spaces and outdoors if distancing is not possible, maintaining adequate ventilation indoors, and regular handwashing with soap and water or a simple alcohol-based disinfectant are all important measures that will reduce transmission.

#### Personal Preventative Practices

As efforts continue across Canada to increase overall vaccine coverage and lower community transmission, public health measures remain the foundation of the pandemic response.

Community transmission of COVID-19 continues in many areas, and new variants of concern have been identified and are circulating. This is why it's even more important to consistently use multiple personal preventive practices at once, regardless of vaccination status.

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<sup>1</sup> The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is now recommending medical masks or respirators, previously only recommended for health professionals, for anyone at increased risk from COVID-19. N-95 and KN-95 masks are considered the highest level of mask protection. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>

This is called a layered approach and it helps protect yourself and others. Think ahead about the actions you can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Get fully vaccinated
- Stay informed and follow public health advice;
- Stay at home and minimize unnecessary close interactions;
- Avoid closed spaces and crowded places;
- Improve ventilation – this can be as simple as opening windows for cross ventilation;
- Wear a well-fitting mask; and
- Wash your hands and keep surfaces clean.

## The Nature Centre's Covid Policies

The Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre aims to keep risk of virus transmission as low as possible during weekend opening hours and Nature Centre events, including building rental events.

Proof of double vaccination: Anyone entering the Nature Centre must provide proof of double vaccination by showing their Vaccine Passport and valid photo ID to staff or the volunteer on duty. We have a QR code scanner in operation at the front desk as well as disposable medical masks available. All persons, including visitors and rental event participants must show valid ID and proof of Covid vaccination.

Masks: are required to be worn in the Nature Centre and mandatory for all visitors, and for staff and volunteers in all the public spaces – including for washroom use which is only available when we have open hours or events. Signage with information about our mandatory mask and vaccine passport policy are posted on the entrance doors and nearby windows to communicate this requirement. When working in the office with the door closed, staff and volunteers may work without masking, as may someone working alone in the Centre, e.g. cleaning the aquarium when the Centre is closed.

Ventilation: The Nature Centre has a heat pump that continuously exchanges inside and outside while heating or cooling the building as needed. This unit should be kept on at all times. Depending on outside temperatures, windows and doors may be opened for additional air circulation.

Limiting numbers and physical distancing: The number of people who may be in the Nature Centre at any one time is limited to 10 people plus one staff/volunteer. Physical distancing is encouraged, unless people are members of a family group already in close contact. We have a plexiglass barrier at the volunteer desk when welcoming volunteers and checking vaccine passports.

## Outdoor Estuary and Restoration School Programs

Participants in outdoor programs or project, may be unmasked as long as appropriate distancing is maintained. If working in close proximity outdoors (facing each other and closer than 2 meters apart) in an outdoor program or project, participants are asked to wear their masks.

## Routine daily screening for all staff and volunteers

These strategies for routine daily screening, physical distancing controls, hand hygiene provisions, and touch point sanitization support the health and safety of volunteers and visitors.

If any of the following conditions apply to a staff member or volunteer, they are asked not to come to the Nature Centre, but to stay home and self isolate:

- Any cold/flu-like [signs or symptoms](#) (fever, cough, tiredness, aches, or severe tiredness)
- Waiting for a test or test result for COVID-19.
- A probable or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.
- Close contact with someone with a probable or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis during the previous 14 days. When returning from any cross-border travel (including from another Canadian province or the United States) staff or volunteers are asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

When a staff member or volunteer becomes sick at the Nature Centre:

- They will go home as soon as possible and stay at home if they are feeling unwell.
- If they develop symptoms during their workday of shift, they must leave the premises as soon as possible, and not admit any further visitors. Environmental cleaning will be performed upon the departure of symptomatic individual. If the person leaving is alone and closing the Centre, they should notify the Centre Coordinator or Board Chair to ensure this cleaning takes place.
- Staff who have symptoms can get a COVID-19 test, and with a negative result, may return to work as long as no fever is present.
- The local public health unit will be notified, and input sought. [www.bccdc.ca/contact](http://www.bccdc.ca/contact)
- The coordinator will arrange for back-up staff/volunteers to fill in as needed and available.

Use of masks and gloves

- [Masks are required](#) to be worn in public indoor spaces by everyone age 5 and older as per BC Centre for Disease Control public guidance updated October 2021.
- We understand that there is low risk of transmission of the virus on surfaces therefore gloves (other than for cleaning and sanitation purposes) no longer need to be worn for activities such as the exchange of money during gift store purchases. If staff or volunteers wish to use gloves, blue disposable nitrile gloves can be found in the tall cabinet in the office.

- Plastic face-shields are no longer recommended in place of masks. They are available for volunteers who would like to use them, in addition to their mask, as another layer of personal protection measure. They are stored on a hook on the back of the office door and should be gently cleaned with sanitizer after use.

## Tracking visitors

All adult visitors entering the Nature Centre during Open Hours must legibly print their name and email address in the guest book under the date of their visit so they can be contacted in case of any risk of exposure.

## Physical distancing controls

- Unless there is a reason to be briefly closer to a visitor to assist them, staff/volunteers are asked respect physical distancing of 2m between themselves and others whenever possible.
- Staff/volunteers must remain aware of the number of people within the Nature Centre or gathered together outside the Centre at one time and encourage them to maintain 2m physical distancing unless those people are already part of a family “bubble”. While it is not common to have more than 10 visitors at a time, if the Centre already has the maximum of 10 visitors inside, members of the public are asked to wait outside in a line spaced 2m apart while waiting to enter the Nature Centre. Summer camp floor dots may be used to aid in marking the 2m interval spacing in the Nature Centre or on the deck outside. Floor dots are left on the Welcome Station Desk for this use.
- A portable plexiglass screen will be used at the volunteer welcome station counter as a barrier between the public and staff/volunteers.

## Hand hygiene provisions

All staff/volunteers are asked to wash their hands after touching any shared material, surfaces or equipment.

When beginning a shift, staff/ volunteers are asked to wash their hands with soap and water before they begin any activities. Hand sanitizer is also available at the front door entry desk.

The touch tank is now an “observation tank” with only staff or trained volunteers touching/ holding creatures for teaching after washing their hands in plain water to reduce the risk of sanitizing and cleaning products getting in the water or near the inter-tidal creatures.

## Cleaning and Sanitization

Transmission of COVID-19 via surfaces is rare, however, Nature Centre Volunteers and staff will undertake regular cleaning of the building and frequently touched objects and surfaces and use the following checklist, consistent with the CPHA to guide this process:

- Cleaning with soap (or detergent) and water, or with oxygenic spray, lowers the number of germs on surfaces.

- Cleaners do not necessarily kill germs, but cleaning can remove germs and lower their numbers, which reduces the risk of spreading infection.
- High-touch surfaces should be cleaned more often and when visibly dirty and disinfected if needed.
- Damp cleaning methods (damp clean cloths and wet mops) are preferred over dry methods (dusting and sweeping). Damp methods of cleaning are less likely to distribute virus droplets into the air.
- Put used disposable cleaning items, such as mop heads and cloths in a lined garbage bin before throwing them out with regular waste. Reusable cleaning items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90C).
- After cleaning, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If using gloves, wash your hands with soap and water after you've removed the gloves. If soap and water are not available, use an [alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) containing at least 60% alcohol.

## If Someone is Sick

If the Nature Centre needs to be cleaned because someone with [Covid-19 signs or symptoms](#) has been working in or visiting the Centre, appropriate disinfectant or oxygenic spray and paper towels should be used for cleaning as follows:

- Washrooms: Use Oxygenic spray and paper towels to wipe taps, door handles, light switches, paper towel dispenser, soap dispenser handle, toilet seat and handles;
- Office – lights, work station including chair, counter, key pad and mouse if used, phone;
- Money box and debit machine – wipe exterior and plastic cover of key pad;
- Touch tank – wipe outside edges of tank with paper towel sprayed with oxygenic cleaner (please be careful not to put chemical in the tank);
- Wipe Sink/tap, paper towel dispenser, countertop;
- Wipe Craft Station table and chairs including any frequently touched supplies (if used) such as art and craft materials – scissors/pencils etc.;
- Wipe Salmon Tank countertop, squeegee;
- Binoculars and microscopes: wipe clean paying attention to eyepiece and knobs, chairs and counter;
- Alarm panel, light switches – careful to not use excessive cleaner;
- Wipe exit door handle, front door handle; and
- Mop floors