

Back to the Office

An Employer Handbook with
Master Checklist for Re-Entry



Disclaimer – Legal Statement

Please be advised that some or all of the information contained in this document may not be applicable to all businesses or places of work. It is intended for office environments.

Given the fluidity of this situation, we strongly recommend that you stay up to date with [WorkSafeBC](#) & [Provincial](#) instruction.

VIATEC bears no responsibility for any circumstances arising out of or related to the adoption, or decision not to adopt, any of the practices or procedures contained in this handbook.

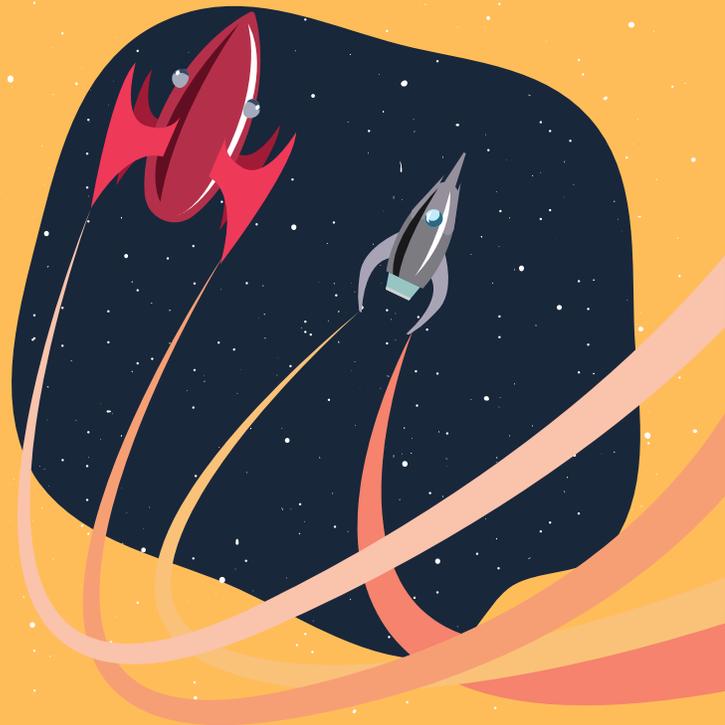




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Over the coming weeks and months, we will begin returning to our offices and things will be different. We're optimistic that equipped with the right approach and procedures, we can ensure the coming months are full of encouraging milestones.

Orders from our favourite Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Dr. Bonnie Henry and guidance to employers and businesses provided by the BC Centre of Disease Control represent the minimum standard that employers must meet, to comply with obligations to ensure worker health and safety.

To help our members meet and exceed the minimum standards, VIATEC has created this handbook. It's intended to help your organization re-enter the workplace and sufficiently develop and implement appropriate health and safety measures related to COVID-19.

Our goal is to provide specific actions to help our members ensure they understand what is required based on the resources included in this document, and provide a practical guide for next steps.





How to know when it is safe to return to the office:

In British Columbia returning to the office will happen in phases based on [BC's Restart Plan](#).

Before opening your office, your organization must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Using the Re-Entry Plan Master Checklist and the Appendix: Guide for COVID-19 Safety Plan will help you create one.

BC Restart Plan: Phases

Phase 1: Essential Services Operating During COVID-19

Mid-May onwards

Phase 2: People are to stay close to home and avoid any travel between communities that is not essential.

June to September

Phase 3: If transmission rates remain low or in decline, people can begin travelling throughout B.C.

To be determined

Phase 4: Conditional on at least one of the following; wide vaccination, "community" immunity, broad successful treatments.



Re-Entry Plan Master Checklist

PART 1: PREPARE

- Determine who in your company will make the decision to reoccupy company space.
- Make a list of the core work.

This is work that needs to be done at the workplace to help your business operate as close to normal under the circumstance.
- Determine who should be at the workplace and who can work from home.

Example: Who are essential to key operations best performed at the office, and are there those who prefer to work onsite due to personal preference or an inadequate at-home working space.

[\(Learn about Health and safety responsibilities when working from home.\)](#)
- Stagger office hours among employees to reduce the numbers present at one time.

Example: Alternate work from home days within teams.

PART 2: WALK-THROUGH

- Consider the new user experience for how traffic flows in and out of the office.
 - Make a list of where traffic signage needs to be placed with how many you will need printed.

Example: Entrances, exits, elevators, stairwells, parking, meeting rooms, kitchen, communal spaces, gym
 - Post signage for Traffic flow directions.
 - Share new traffic flow guidelines with staff prior to them entering the building.
- Create visual markers on the floor around workstations and elevators.

This is for clearly defining the amount of safe space recommended (2 metres wherever possible).

- Establish elevator and stairwell usage protocol plan.
With Landlord if appropriate. Most elevators are 5 to 7 ft wide, so to adhere to physical distancing, you may have to limit the number of people allowed on at one time.
Example: Use stairs whenever possible. If there are more than two people inside, wait for the next one. Follow floor markers when inside.
 - Post signage for elevator and stairwell usage protocol.
- Reconfigure how the workplace is set up.
Aim to adhere to the 2 metre physical distancing rule (desks, printers, water coolers or work stations). Use arrows on the floor that direct people to walk clockwise — and only clockwise — in one-way lanes.
- Consider engineering controls.
Example: Plexiglass barriers at reception - wherever public facing.
- Consider limiting room occupancies.
Suggested guideline: 49 square feet per person.
 - Post signage if necessary.
- Post reminders for personal hygiene and physical distancing practicing.
 - Elevator Stairwells Meeting rooms
 - Restrooms Parking Exits
 - Directories Kitchen & Lunchroom Entrances



"HIGH TOUCH ITEMS"

- Change light switches to sensors.
If you cannot reasonably move to hands-free lights for your conference rooms, leave a hand sanitizer stand next to each light switch that is used often.
- Add or replace garbage bins with foot pedal or no lid.
- Provide employees with their own individual item instead of using shared office supplies.
Examples: whiteboard markers, staplers, HDMI cables
- Set up "sanitation stations."
 - Waterless hand sanitizer
 - Disinfecting wipes
 - Conveniently located trash bin to dispose of those items.

- Place sanitation stations within eyesight from every seat within the office, as well as in major walkway areas:
 - Lunchrooms
 - Break rooms
 - Elevators
 - Conference rooms
- Post signage for where “Sanitation Stations” are located.

PART 3: NEXT STEPS

- Conduct a deep clean prior to re-entry.
(See Appendix: Deep Clean Checklist an illustrative deep clean).
- Schedule recurring disinfecting services.
You may have to increase cleaning visits, or reassess current cleaning duties to cover more high-touch surfaces including door handles and elevator buttons.
- Establish a Visitor Policy.
(See Appendix: Sample Visitor Policy) Visitors may include customers, service technicians, stakeholder, clients, business partners, friends and family.
 - Post Visitor Notice ([Click to download free templates](#))
- Establish a strict COVID-19 Safety Plan.*
(See Appendix: Guide for COVID-19 Safety Plan).
- Inform staff on how they can raise safety concerns.
- Create a system to check and track whether your health & safety plan is being adhered to by all.
Example: employees must read and sign policies and plans.
- Complete your own Pandemic Preparedness Response Plan
Includes Readiness Assessment, Business Continuity Plan and Employee Training.
- Post a physical copy of your COVID-19 Safety Plan somewhere visible.*
Must be readily available for review by workers, other persons who may attend at the workplace to provide services, members of the public as well as a health officer or a WorkSafeBC officer if requested.

Post a copy of your COVID-19 Safety Plan on your website.*

* **Required by the Order of the Provincial Health Officer**

Circulate your plans with stakeholders and employees in advance of re-entry:

Pandemic Preparedness Response

COVID-19 Safety Plan

Visitor Policy

Traffic Flow Guidelines General Precautions

(See Appendix: General Precautions to Avoid the Spread of COVID-19)

QUICK REFERENCE LIST: SIGNAGE

- Reminders for personal hygiene practices
- Elevator usage protocol
- Meeting room occupancy
- Maps or signs to show employees where “Sanitation Stations” are located

QUICK REFERENCE LIST: POLICY & PROTOCOLS

- Visitor Policy
- COVID-19 Safety Plan
- Pandemic Preparedness Response Plan

Resources



[Guidance for Manufacturers](#)

[B.C. Order from the Provincial Health Officer](#)

[WorkSafeBC: Preventing exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace](#)

[B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)

[B.C Orders Notice & Guidance](#)

[B.C. COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[Visitor Notice Templates from CFIB](#)

[Posters: Prevent the Spread of Infections](#)

[Pandemic Preparedness Questionnaire](#)

[VIATEC Member Resources](#)

Appendices



Appendix: Sample Visitor Policy

Visitors may include customers, service technicians, stakeholder, clients, business partners, friends and family.

Our focus is on helping to keep our employees healthy.

Until further notice, we will allow visitor access on a case-by-case basis. We will conduct all meetings, including interviews remotely rather than in-person. Over time, this may be relaxed.

All visitors must adhere to our company's COVID Safety Plan and sign in with the appropriate staff member to help us track all visitors.

As much as possible, visitors should be allowed only minimal access to parts of the office to avoid contamination of people and spaces.

Appendix: General Precautions to Avoid the Spread of COVID-19

- Stay at home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.
- Practice diligent hand hygiene at all times. Wash your hands regularly with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. Antibacterial soap is NOT required for COVID-19.
- Practice cough etiquette. Cough into your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you sneeze. Immediately dispose of all used tissues in an appropriate waste bin and wash your hands right away.
- Maintain a physical distance of two metres from others at all times
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not share food, drinks, or utensils.
- Avoid touching personal items of travellers, such as luggage and carry-on.

Appendix: Guide for COVID-19 Safety Plan

COVID Safety Plan

Company:

Date of Document Creation:

Part 1 - Facility Readiness

- Building “Flow”
- Elevator Usage
- Changes in Room Occupancy
- Facility Adaptations

Part 2 - Personal Health and Eliminating the Spread of COVID-19

- Employee Guidelines
- If Employees Present Illness Symptoms
- Return to work after diagnosis of COVID-19
- Physical distancing
- Individual protection

Part 3 - Additional Resources and Works Consulted

Part 1 - Facility Readiness

Building “Flow”

Detail any new traffic flow directions here.

EXAMPLE: We are implementing a new traffic flow to help guide the movement of those entering and exiting the premises. Where appropriate, eye level signage and floor decals will be posted to encourage physical distancing while moving throughout the building.

During the regular operating hours of 8am to 5pm on Monday to Friday, we strongly encourage everyone to adopt the front sliding doors as an “Entry Only” way into the building while designating the side entrance as an “Exit Only” way.

Elevator Usage

Outline Elevator Protocol here.

EXAMPLE: The elevator is available for use however, from corner to corner, the longest possible distance between two people in the elevator is roughly 5 feet which is under the current guideline for physical distancing. As such, priority is given to those with special accessibility requirements, furthermore limiting the occupancy to one person per trip. For those that are able to, we highly recommend using the stairwells as much as possible.

To minimize the transfer of surface microbes and germs, sanitizer wipes and dispensers are mounted by the elevator entrances on every floor for tenants to use before calling the elevator and/or before selecting their desired floor.

Changes in Room Occupancy

Outline maximum occupancy changes here.

EXAMPLE: To comply with the guidelines for physical distancing, the following list outlines the new room capacities for different workspaces. Signage is posted outside of these areas, however we advise all users to practice discretion when entering these spaces:

- Boardroom 1 and Boardroom 2: 5-6 people
- Front Lobby: 2-3 people
- Kitchen and Lunch Room: 3-4 people

Facility Adaptations

Note any physical changes and upgraded cleaning protocols you've made to the building here.

EXAMPLE: When returning to work, please note the following building adaptations we've made to prepare for re-entry and to help our community feel comfortable in our space:

- Installation of numerous "sanitation stations" near high-touch surfaces
- Eye-level signage and floor decals to encourage building "flow" and physical distancing
- Cleaning staff have increased priority to "High-Touch" surfaces with cleaning being done every Wednesday and Sunday evenings
- Deep clean

Part 2 - Personal Health and Eliminating the Spread of COVID-19

Employee Guidelines

- EXAMPLE:**
- As much as possible, all employees must adhere to the general precautions to avoid the spread of COVID-19 including physical distancing measures by maintaining a physical distance of two metres from others at all times.
 - Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own workstations and other high-contact areas and items regularly with the hygiene products provided.
 - If you are healthy, employees are not required to wear masks at this time, however that is your choice and people wearing masks should be respected. Learn more about wearing masks.
 - Employees with a safety concern can contact our facilities manager: Name, Contact Info or their direct manager.

If Employees Present Illness Symptoms

- EXAMPLE:**
- Employees may be excused from work without requiring a doctor's note.
 - Employees must report respiratory illness to employer and cannot return to work for at least 14 days following the onset of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath. A full list of symptoms can be found here.
 - If an employee is sick or has known close contact with someone who had COVID-19 as per CDC guidelines, they must self-quarantine for a 14-day period and work from home if possible.
 - Staff can use the COVID-19 self-assessment tool at BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to help determine if further assessment or testing for COVID-19 is needed; contact 8-1-1 if further health advice is required; and 9-1-1 if it is an emergency.

Return to work after diagnosis of COVID-19

EXAMPLE: We prohibit all our employees from reporting to work if they have COVID-19. They may return to work only if they meet one of the following conditions:

- Fever completely gone for at least three days AND improved respiratory symptoms (cough, difficulty breathing) AND at least seven days have passed since the initial onset of symptoms

OR

- Fever completely gone AND improved respiratory symptoms (cough, difficulty breathing) AND negative results from the public authority's COVID-19 testing protocol (to date = two negative tests 24 hours apart)

It should be noted that return-to-work conditions are an evolving aspect of COVID-19. We will update these as recommended by government authorities.

We will implement or update continuity planning if key players in our office test positive for COVID-19.

A deep clean will be scheduled immediately upon learning of a team member who has COVID-19 or who has had close contact with someone who is suspected of having COVID-19.

Physical Distancing

Outline all of the steps your organization has taken to adhere to public guidelines on social/physical distancing.

- EXAMPLE:**
- Instructing employees to work a minimum of 2 metres apart
 - Reconfigure how the workplace is set up and staggering staff work hours
 - Use of technological applications instead of in-person meetings
 - Visitor Policy

Individual protection

Outline how you have provided employees with various measures to protect themselves and the health and safety of their colleagues and our members.

- EXAMPLE:**
- Hand hygiene signage
 - Provided individual hand held office supplies

Acknowledgement & Compliance

EXAMPLE: I have read and understand the above statement.

Name, Title:

Signed:

Date:

Part 3 - Additional Resources and Works Consulted

[Guidance for Manufacturers](#)

[B.C. Order from the Provincial Health Officer](#)

[WorkSafeBC: Preventing exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace](#)

[B.C. COVID-19 response update](#)

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[VIATEC Member Resources](#)

Appendix: Deep Cleaning Checklist

Floors throughout the office:

- Sweep floors
- Mop floors
- Vacuum floors, area rugs, & corners
- Dust baseboards, window sills, & ledges
- Vacuum couches, chairs, and common area furniture
- Vacuum under all furniture (move chairs and furniture as much as possible)
- Wipe down baseboards with a wet cloth

Workstations:

- Remove any dishes or obvious trash
- Take out trash & replace liners
- Dust monitors & backs of chairs
- Wipe down open desk surfaces
- Remove dust from cords under desks
- Push in chairs / organize any furniture

Conference Rooms:

- Clean & disinfect all surfaces
- Clean & disinfect glass doors & walls
- Take out trash & replace liners
- Remove any dishes or food items
- Tidy & reset conference rooms (push in chairs, etc.)
- Clean & disinfect monitor screens
- Dust all furniture, backs of chairs, and ledges

Common Areas & Lounges:

- Clean & disinfect all surfaces
- Clean & disinfect glass doors and walls
- Take out trash & replace liners
- Sanitize switches, door handles, etc.
- Remove any dishes or food items
- Unpack deliveries and put away all supplies
- Dust printer
- Ensure printer has paper stocked
- Straighten couches / furniture & fluff pillows
- Dust all shelves in reception / entrance area

Bathrooms:

- Clean & disinfect sink & counters
- Clean & disinfect toilets & urinals (including base & behind toilet)
- Clean & disinfect toilet paper dispensers and feminine waste bins
- Wipe down glass areas
- Sweep & mop floors
- Take out trash and replace liners
- Restock toilet paper
- Restock paper towels
- Refill hand soap dispensers
- Restock toilet seat covers
- Sanitize switches, door handles, etc.
- Restock other items (tampons, mouthwash, etc.)
- Clean & disinfect all baseboards & window sills
- Dust vents / fans

Kitchen:

- Wipe and sanitize all surfaces
- Sanitize kitchen sink
- Load and run dishwasher
- Take out trash & recycling + replace liners
- Spot Clean & disinfect behind and around trash & recycling
- Clean & disinfect inside microwave
- Refill hand soap
- Unload dishwasher
- Wipe down exterior and under appliances
- Generally tidy area
- Wipe down water machine & empty water tray
- Clean & disinfect under water machine
- Wipe down all shelves in the refrigerator and freezer
- Ensure honey, tea, oils, sugars, etc. are fully stocked
- Remove all honey, tea, oils, sugars, etc. and clean tray
- Empty all cabinets and drawers and clean interior surfaces
- Clean & disinfect airpots / coffee machines

Trash:

- Breakdown all cardboard boxes and bundle together
- Put all trash in designated pick up area

Supplies:

- Ensure all supplies are put away and organized in supply closet

Locking Up:

- Ensure office doors are locked & secure
- Close and lock all exterior facing windows



Find a mistake?

Something missing?

Got a better link or resource we should include?

This document was put together fast with the best info we could find and we plan to release updates as we learn more from policy-makers, regulators and our Members' front line experience so please send us your suggestion to: pparker@viatec.ca