

As the province proceeds with its [four-step restart plan](#), WorkSafeBC is actively collaborating with Public Health on an approach to workplace health and safety that aligns with Step 3, which begins no sooner than July 1. While some details of that approach are still being finalized, I'd like to provide a high-level overview of what will be expected of employers in this step.

From COVID-19 Safety Plans to communicable disease prevention

On June 17, the Provincial Health Officer issued a [statement](#) to employers on transitioning from COVID-19 Safety Plans to communicable disease prevention.

Prior to Step 3 of the restart plan, the expectation is that employers will continue to maintain and review their COVID-19 Safety Plans. Beginning with Step 3, employers will no longer be required to maintain a COVID-19 Safety Plan, and will instead transition to communicable disease prevention.

Communicable disease prevention focuses on basic risk reduction principles to reduce the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. The fundamental components of communicable disease prevention include both ongoing measures to maintain at all times and additional measures to be implemented as advised by Public Health.

- Ongoing measures – maintain at all times:
 - Implementing policies to support staff who may be sick with a communicable disease, so they can avoid being at the workplace.
 - Promoting hand hygiene by providing hand-hygiene facilities with appropriate supplies, and reminding employees through policies and signage to wash their hands regularly.
 - Maintaining a clean environment through routine cleaning processes.
 - Ensuring building ventilation is properly maintained and functioning as designed.
 - Supporting vaccination for vaccine-preventable conditions to the extent that you are able.
- Additional measures – implemented as advised by Public Health:
 - Employers must also be prepared to implement additional prevention measures as required by a medical health officer or the provincial health officer to deal with communicable diseases in their workplace or region, should those be necessary.

To assist employers in the fundamental components of communicable disease prevention, WorkSafeBC has developed [Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#). This guide describes a four-step process to help employers reduce the risk of communicable disease in their workplace, which involves understanding the level of risk in the workplace, application of the fundamentals and implementing appropriate measures, communicating policies and protocols to all workers, and updating measures and safeguards as required.

- Download [Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#) here.

The Provincial Health Officer's statement recommends that employers maintain some of their existing COVID-19 Safety Plan protocols, specifically those that do not negatively

impact business operations. This may include barriers already erected in the workplace or directional signage to reduce points of congestion, as examples. This will allow for a transitional period and progression from COVID-19 Safety Plans to communicable disease plans.

Responding to increased risk

Although COVID-19 is now being managed primarily through vaccination, like all communicable diseases, it may still circulate. Similarly, the level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may elevate from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a workplace. In these cases, employers will be advised by medical health officers or the provincial health officer of the measures they need to take to manage the risk. Employers are required to monitor for communicable disease related information from their regional public health officials and the provincial health officer related to their area and industry and to follow that guidance and direction should additional measures be necessary in their workplace.

For more information

I encourage you to please visit [WorkSafeBC's website](#) for more information and resources on communicable disease prevention and how to prepare for Step 3 of BC's Restart.