



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



ADVICE FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

March 14, 2020

The focus in BC continues to be to contain the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and at a provincial level. The majority of people who become infected with COVID-19 will experience a mild illness that will not require medical care, but those who are vulnerable to the disease – those who are elderly or who have underlying conditions that compromise the immune system – are at risk for severe illness. To protect those most vulnerable, and to make sure that our health system is able to care for those who become severely ill, **we are asking people to self-monitor their health and to apply a low threshold when feeling unwell to stay home until they are better.**

There are common sense practices that everyone can do to prevent infection and transmission. This includes hand washing, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, avoiding touching your face, and practicing social distancing. At a department level, consider increasing your routine cleaning practices – if you are cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces once a day, move to twice a day using the products you already use. Consider the density of your department and provide additional space for the public and staff members to interact; for example, consider how seating could be expanded so that people are able to put some distance – 1 to 2 metres – between one another. Ensure your washrooms remain stocked with soap and consider offering hand sanitizer at entrances. Support staff to stay home if they are sick.

I have recommended against non-essential travel outside of Canada, and that as of noon on March 12, 2020, those who do travel outside of Canada self-isolate at home for 14 days upon their return.

- **14-day self-isolation does NOT apply** to emergency services members (e.g., police, fire, ambulance) unless they have travelled to Hubei Province in China, Italy, or Iran.
- All emergency services members who travel to outside of Canada **are required to self monitor daily and use proper PPE when providing care.**
- If a staff member who has travelled out of country **develops symptoms**, they should self isolate and contact 8-1-1.

Other countries have adopted more restrictive containment approaches; this is not the path we are taking in BC. We expect that transmission of COVID-19 will increase in the province and are providing advice and recommendations in response to the situation as it evolves in an effort to slow transmission.

Please continue to monitor the BC Centre for Disease Control website on COVID-19 for updates, information, and resources: www.bccdc.ca/covid19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Henry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "H".

Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer