

# AME OFFICE COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN – JANUARY 2021

*Version 2.1 – January 13, 2021*

*This Safety Plan has been developed in accordance with the Provincial Health Officer’s Order of May 14, 2020 and is subject to change. The Order may be found here: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/class\\_order\\_employers\\_covid-19\\_safety\\_plans\\_covid-19\\_may\\_14\\_final.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/class_order_employers_covid-19_safety_plans_covid-19_may_14_final.pdf)*

*The Safety Plan has been revised incorporating current guidance and the Workplace Safety order issued December 16, 2020: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-workplace-safety.pdf>.*

## COVID-19 BACKGROUND

COVID-19 is a new form of infectious coronavirus that belongs to the same family as influenza and SARS. It is spread by contact with exhaled bodily fluids onto mucous membranes of another individual, commonly through coughing or sneezing. There is currently no vaccine and no cure for COVID-19 and so steps must be taken to prevent transmission.

British Columbia is currently in a state of emergency, with restrictions on movement and workplaces. The provincial state of emergency is updated as required here: <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/covid19-provincial-state-of-emergency/>.

This document has been prepared to outline safe work procedures following the reopening of the office as follows:

<b>Late June -</b>	<b>AME employees</b>
<b>Early July -</b>	<b>Visitors by appointment</b>
<b>February (tentative) -</b>	<b>Members and public in accordance with occupancy limits</b>

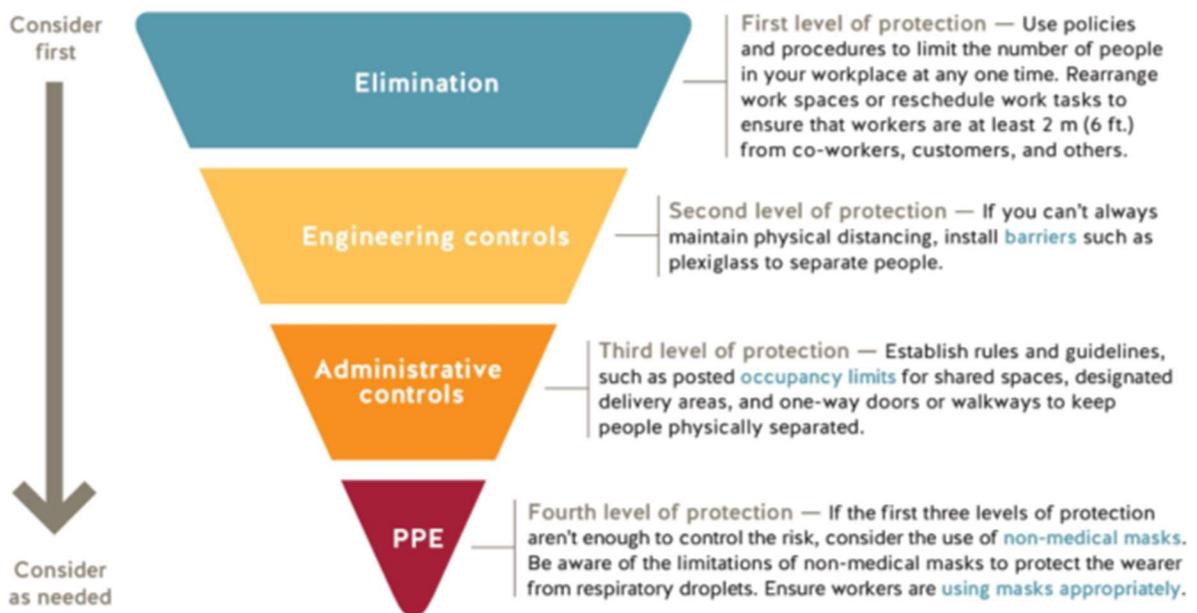
**\*Note: As of November 9, 2020, only employees, contractors and others essential to the day-to-day operations of AME are permitted in the office.**

Although gatherings of 50 or people are prohibited, even close contact work with two or three people can pose a risk of transmission and so this should be considered in the office or worksite.

The exploration and mining industries have been classified as an “essential service” in British Columbia as it feeds a critical supply chain. However, essential service does not mean that practices can continue without precautions and all activities should be restricted where possible, particularly in the early stages of the pandemic.

This document compiles information from several sources including the AME Fieldwork Safety Guidelines developed by SGDS, WorkSafeBC and employers with office environments. It is meant to be used in conjunction with official advice and orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer.

As a general guideline, this safety plan advocates for using controls that provide the highest level of protection. Elimination of a hazard is the highest level of protection, followed by engineering and then administrative controls, with personal protective equipment as being the lowest level of protection (see below).



Source: WorkSafeBC

## EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The first responsibility of employers is to the health, safety and welfare of our staff as well as members, visitors and contractors. This includes measures that will reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 either in the workplace or on site.

The following steps are recommended to ensure physical distancing is practiced in an enclosed workplace such as an office:

- Encouraging workers to work from home
- Reconfiguring the workplace to maintain appropriate distances between workers.
- Replacing in-person meetings with practices like teleconferences as an alternative when possible.
- Limiting all non-essential work travel.
- Educating workers on health and safety measures to prevent transmission of infectious disease.
- Increasing workplace cleaning, providing necessary supplies and reinforcing personal hygiene messages to workers.

When working from home, it should be remembered that many health and safety roles, rights and responsibilities are just as applicable at home as they are in the workplace.

## EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Whether at home or in the office, the employee has responsibilities to their own health and safety as well as to their colleagues.

- If you or anyone in your household is showing COVID-19 like symptoms, you must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days from the onset of symptoms, until the symptoms have completely resolved, and you have had no fever for 72 hours. *(See Appendix A.)*
- If you have travelled internationally, you must remain away from the workplace for a minimum of 14 days, regardless if you are showing symptoms or not. *(See Appendix A.)*
- In the workplace, employees should comply with all employer's instructions around minimizing exposure to COVID-19.
- Employees must wear masks in common areas of the office including boardrooms.
- Employees must wash their hands frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds, using soap and water. *(See Appendix B.)*
- Employees must take steps to minimize exposure to COVID-19 while away from the workplace including using hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol minimum content where handwashing is not available.

**All employees are encouraged to work from home when it is practical to do so.** When an employee does work at the AME office, the employee must complete a health check self-assessment (see Appendix A) and confirm passing the health check to AME.

**All employees have the right to refuse work** if they believe it presents an undue hazard. This is defined as “an unwarranted, inappropriate, excessive, or disproportionate” risk, above and beyond the potential exposure a general member of the public would face through regular, day-to-day activity.

Steps should be followed to resolve the issue with their employer, starting by reporting the undue hazard for investigation. Employers then consider the refusal on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation.

If the matter is unresolved, then the employee or employer must contact WorkSafeBC whereby a prevention officer will investigate and take steps to find a workable solution.

## VISITOR RESPONSIBILITIES

**Note: As of November 9, 2020, only employees, contractors and others essential to the day-to-day operations of AME are permitted in the office.**

Protocols respecting COVID-19 symptoms are similar to those for employees. Visitors must be signed in and out, as per usual office protocol. Additionally, staff will collect contact information for each visitor and maintain for thirty days in case contact tracing is required.

The following should be communicated to any visitors: when confirming a meeting and/or in person.

### **AME Protocols for Visitors in Response to COVID-19**

- If you or anyone in your household is showing COVID-19 like symptoms, you must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days from the onset of symptoms, until the symptoms have completely resolved, and you have had no fever for 72 hours.
- If you have travelled internationally, visitors are not permitted to enter AME for a minimum of 14 days, regardless if you are showing symptoms or not.
- Visitors should comply with all AME instructions around minimizing exposure to COVID-19. The AME COVID-19 Safety Plan is posted at the AME office and online.
- Visitors must wash their hands frequently for a minimum of 20 seconds, using soap and water or hand sanitizer (with a minimum 60% alcohol content).

## CONTROLLING THE RISK OF COVID-19 EXPOSURE

The following are adapted from WorkSafeBC guidelines and orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer.

- Maintain a distance of two metres between workers by planning work schedules, organizing work tasks, and limiting contact between people.
- Avoid large groups congregating in one area by reducing in-person meetings and other gatherings. Meetings including board and committee meetings and other events should be conducted online whenever possible.
- Provide hand-sanitizing stations in all common areas including the lobby, library, storage room and boardrooms.
- Clean all common areas and surfaces after each use.
- Limit capacity in elevators to no more than two persons per car.
  - Occupancy limits will be determined for each common area and posted – at no time may there be more than 50 people in the office (i.e. throughout the whole eighth floor). At any time in common areas, there should be at least 5 square metres of unencumbered floor space per person (i.e. space that is not occupied by furniture) per person. *See Appendix C for an example of occupancy limit signage.*

## EQUIPMENT HANDLING

- All staff should use equipment exclusively for their use where possible. This includes computers, staplers, hole punches and other stationery items.
- All shared equipment should be cleaned using soap and water, or in the case of electronics, alcohol wipes. Pay special attention to high-use surfaces, including keypads, touch screens or hand holds.
- Water coolers should be sanitized after each use, and any glasses or containers filled at water coolers must be washed after each use.
- Coffee dispensers are for staff use only, and should be sanitized after each use. Hands should also be washed before and after each use.

The following chart provides a reference for the amount of time the virus is known to remain viable on different surfaces.

Surface	Examples	Viability Window
Metal	Door handles, tools such as hammers	5 days
Wood	Furniture, construction materials	4 days

Plastics	Packaging, ore bags, rubber grips, touch screens	2 to 3 days
Stainless Steel	Pots and pans, cutlery	2 to 3 days
Cardboard	Packaging, boxes	24 hours
Copper	Coins, tableware	4 hours
Aluminum	Soda cans	2 to 8 hours
Glass	Drinking glasses, mirrors, windows	5 days
Ceramics	Tableware, dishes	5 days
Paper	Notebooks, receipts	5 days

## HYGIENE AND FOOD SAFETY

- Continue good hand hygiene protocols. This is most important at the following times:
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - After coughing, sneezing or blowing one’s nose
  - Before and after contact with an ill person
  - After touching dirty surfaces such as taps and doorknobs and after going to the bathroom.
- Ensure safe food handling. Employees should bring food in their own containers and take those containers home with them at the end of the day. Employees should take special care when handling any tableware; these should be washed thoroughly both before and after use. Special care should be taken to touch only the items you need and not the surrounding items.
- Any garbage or recyclables must be carefully disposed of using the usual process. Food, drink items, dishes and cutlery are not to be shared.
- Staff lunchroom amenities (fridge, microwave, etc.) may be used; however, staff are encouraged to use these items as infrequently as possible and only with a routine cleaning and sanitizing plan in place. Hands must be washed before and after using shared items.
- Other measures include:
  - Do not use self-service trays or buy prepared food that is exposed (i.e. non-packaged bakery items). Other foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables should be well washed and rinsed where possible.
  - Practice good hand hygiene when handling food.
  - Do not prepare food for yourself or others if you are feeling ill.
  - Ensure all surfaces in the food preparation / eating areas are cleaned and disinfected after each meal. Pay attention to areas such as the underside edge of chair seats.

## USE OF PPE INCLUDING MASKS

Masks are now required for everyone in all workplaces in shared work areas and areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained. This includes the kitchen, hallways, boardrooms and common areas of the building including elevators.

Masks should also be used when two people are required in proximity to complete a task (e.g. two people working on a single piece of electronic equipment simultaneously; two people lifting a heavy object).

Other personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, is generally not needed in the normal course of work; however, they should be used when all other controls are not possible or practical.

Should employees and visitors wish to wear a cloth mask in situations where they are not required, this is a personal choice.

Please review the following information sheets before using masks:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-health-safety-selecting-using-masks?lang=en>.

## SICKNESS AND FIRST AID

If an employee or visitor starts to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while in the office, they should be allowed to self-isolate and call the 811 for further advice. Advise the rest of the team that a person is currently isolated. Note that at this time the sick person may need to provide additional information about the work situation, colleagues and movements to Health Authorities, so having that recorded as part of a standard safety plan is recommended. If a worker or visitor is severely ill (e.g. has difficulty breathing or has chest pain, 911 should be called immediately).

The need for First Aid on site should be minimized at all times under regular management protocols and diligence. However, accidents and incidents can still happen, and so the usual procedures for dealing with potential communicable diseases should be followed. First aid kits must contain gloves and facemasks (N95 if possible). Additional items such as eye protection are also advisable.

## CLEANING, SANITIZING AND DISINFECTING

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Common areas of the office should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document.

This includes:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises at least once a day.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched shared surfaces at least twice a day. (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, electronic devices, keyboards)
- Cleaning and disinfecting of any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Using common, commercially available detergents and disinfectant products and closely following the instructions on the label.
- Limiting items that are not easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g. shared fabric or soft items such as upholstered chairs).
- Using paper hand towels rather than hand dryers.
- Emptying garbage containers daily.
- Wearing disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.
- Washing hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Washrooms should be cleaned at least twice a day keeping in line with the high touch surface area protocols.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- AME will use multiple channels to communicate with members and key stakeholders including: email, conference and video calls, the district's website, social media, posters and news releases.
- AME's website contains a page dedicated to COVID-19 related information. Communications will be evaluated regularly to ensure that messaging is being received as intended.
- Staff are familiar with the COVID-19 safety plan, and the safety plan will be posted in the office and online.

- Staff have been reminded that all health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- Additional health and safety information is being shared with staff via email in advance of their return to work to help to mitigate any concerns they may have.
- Staff and visitors are encouraged to share concerns and ask questions.
- The number of non-essential people coming into the AME office has been limited since mid-March. The elevators are locked requiring all visitors to phone or email ahead and to stay in the lobby area until met by AME staff.

## APPENDICES

Further printable resources are available in the WorkSafe BC COVID-19 Safety Plan template:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/checklist/covid-19-safety-plan?lang=en>.

### APPENDIX A: KEEP OUR WORKPLACE SAFE FROM COVID-19

# Keep our workplace safe from COVID-19

Please do not enter this workplace if you:

- Have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days
- Have been identified by Public Health as a close contact of someone with COVID-19
- Have been told to isolate by Public Health
- Are displaying any of the following new or worsening symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- Extreme fatigue or tiredness
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**If you are displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, refer to HealthLink BC at 811.**

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APPENDIX B: HOW TO HANDWASH

# HOW TO HANDWASH



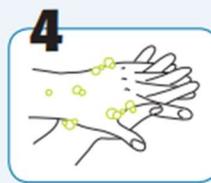
**1**  
Wet hands with warm water.



**2**  
Apply soap.



**3**  
Lather soap and rub hands palm to palm.



**4**  
Rub in between and around fingers.

Lather hands for a total of 30 seconds



**5**  
Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.



**6**  
Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.



**7**  
Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.



**8**  
Rinse thoroughly under running water.



**9**  
Pat hands dry with paper towel.



**10**  
Turn off water using paper towel.



**11**  
Your hands are now safe.



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# Help prevent the spread of COVID-19

In order to reduce risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19, we are limiting the number of people in this space.

## Address/room/space:

AME – 8<sup>th</sup> floor, 889 West Pender Street

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Occupancy limit: **50** people

Please follow physical distancing markers and observe signs for each room and workspace.