

COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

JUNE 2020

Department of Health and Safety Services

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SCOPE

This COVID-19 Safety Plan (Safety Plan) applies to North Island College (NIC) employees, students, contractors and visitors to the campus who could be exposed to the COVID-19 virus while doing their assigned work.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

NIC is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our employees. A combination of preventative measures will be used to minimize exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Our work procedures will protect not only our employees, but also other workers and/or the public who enter our facilities, including our students. All employees and students must follow the procedures outlined in this plan to prevent or reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

The purpose of this Safety Plan is to protect employees and students from exposure to the COVID-19 virus, to reduce the risk of infection in the event of an exposure, and to comply with the WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations as well as their guidance specific to COVID-19.

NIC will strive to find ways to control or eliminate exposure to the COVID-19 virus by developing and implementing risk controls specified by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and BC Ministry of Health, establishing safe work practices that incorporate the required exposure control methods, raising awareness, and providing education and training for our employees and students.

ACRONYMS

BCCDC – British Columbia Centre for Disease Control

PPE – Personal protective equipment

SWP – Safe work practice

WHO – World Health Organization



RESPONSIBILITIES

North Island College (The employer)

- Support the implementation of the Safety Plan.
- Ensure that the tools, equipment and resources are available to support the implementation of this Safety Plan in all instructional, research and work areas at the College.

Administrative Leads (Deans, Associate Deans, Managers, Directors, others working in a supervisory capacity, etc.)

- Read and be familiar with this Safety Plan.
- To reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, ensure copies of NIC's COVID-19 Safety Plan are available for staff and faculty
- Approve and ensure that, with the support of Health and Safety Services, workers have received adequate instruction on the hazards associated with COVID-19 and the implementation of the appropriate control measures is done by instructors within the classrooms, shops, laboratories and other worksites under their supervision.
- Ensuring that work is conducted in a manner that minimizes the risk of exposure to faculty, employees and students.
- Work with the Manager, Health and Safety to ensure that the Safety Plans identify the proper tools and personal protective equipment required to effectively reduce exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, and that employees have access to them.
- Ensure that faculty, employees and students using respirators have been properly fit-tested, that faculty, employees, and students are trained on the use and limitations of respirators, and that the fit-test results and training are documented by the department and/or faculty.

Faculty and employees

- Help to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Read and be familiar with this Safety Plan. Inspect the work area regularly (minimum daily) to ensure a safe work environment. Complete educational requirement related to COVID-19 that are recommended by NIC, and/or Health and Safety Services.
- Use identified hazard controls and follow safe work practices established by the Department and NIC.
- Use the available equipment and PPE provided to reduce exposure to COVID-19 and ensure that students are following hazard controls and PPE requirements.
- Report all health and safety-related incidents to the Manager, Health and Safety Services.
- Report issues related to conduct that pose serious risks as per [Policy 3.06](#) Community Code of Academic, Personal and Professional Conduct (Code of Conduct) Policy



HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES

The Health and Safety Services team consists of the Manager of Health & Safety and Health & Safety Advisor. Health & Safety Services is a resource to NIC faculty, employees, administrators and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. They will help guide safe practices and processes in the following ways:

- Creation of a COVID-19 Safety Plan.
- Conduct risk assessments of facilities and processes
- Assist and/or coordinate fit testing for workers where required.
- Assist NIC faculties and departments develop and implement safe work practices that will reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Provide pre-approved templates or checklists for exposure control to assist faculty and administrative leads with assessing and creating plans for experiential learning requiring face to face contact.

RISK IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL

COVID-19 virus: The COVID-19 virus is transmitted via larger liquid **droplets** when a person coughs or sneezes. The virus can enter from these droplets through the eyes, nose or throat if an individual is in close contact with a person who carries the COVID-19 virus. The virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin. The COVID-19 virus can be spread by touch if a person has used their hands to cover their mouth or nose when they cough or sneeze.

Droplet Contact: Some diseases can be transferred by large infected droplets contacting surfaces of the eye, nose, or mouth. For example, large droplets that may be visible to the naked eye are generated when a person sneezes or coughs. These droplets typically spread only one to two metres and are too large to float in the air (i.e. airborne) and quickly fall to the ground. Influenza and SARS are two examples of diseases capable of being transmitted from droplet contact. **Currently, health experts believe that the COVID-19 virus can also be transmitted in this way.**

RISK ASSESSMENT

NIC followed a risk-assessment approach to determine the types of controls that are needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The risk assessment was adapted from WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Guideline [G6.34-6](#). Using this guideline as a reference, we have determined the risk levels of the various tasks carried out by staff at the College. The hazards related to COVID-19 are assessed both without any controls in place, and after the controls described in the risk assessment have been put in place.

The various risk controls that have been put in place generally fall into the categories described in the Risk Control section of this document.

RISK CONTROL

The BC OHS Regulation listed above requires NIC to implement infectious disease controls in the following order of preference:

Controls used to mitigate the risks of exposure include:

- Elimination
- Engineering Controls
- Administrative Controls
- Education and Training
- Safe Work Practices
- Personal Protective Equipment

Elimination controls are those that remove the risk of contracting COVID-19 in the variety of workplaces that exist at NIC, including worksites/classrooms/shops/laboratories.

This includes eliminating face-to-face contact, by modifying service delivery to rely on video conferencing, phone, email or regular mail. NIC has moved to digital delivery in many program areas, which has significantly reduced the number of staff on students on campus. Administrative teams are also reducing staff on campus, where appropriate. This is what we have heard Dr. Bonnie Henry describe as “bigger spaces, less faces” and is one of NIC’s most significant control measures.

Employees working from home should read Appendix C - NIC’s “Work from Home” procedures.

Engineering controls are those that alter the work/classroom/shop/laboratory environment to create a safe space. This would include distance controls (2 metres or greater) at reception counters or working inside an enclosure or behind a partition when helping customers or students. If practicable, conduct financial transactions by electronic means rather than cash or cheque. Additional examples may include physical barriers, which limit personal human contacts.

These kinds of physical controls will be used where maintaining the 2 metres of physical distant is difficult. NIC has installed Plexiglas in a number of areas – such as classrooms, shops and cafeterias. The Facilities team has been installing specific engineering controls in response to the requirements of the safety plans that have been created for services that have returned to campus. This work will continue as more staff and programs return to campus in the Fall.

Resource: The following Ministry of Health poster is an informative image about reducing the risk of transmitting COVID-19.



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN PROGRESS

**Maintain a distance of at least
2 arms lengths from others.**



BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Health



CCIC
BC Centre for Disease Control

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.





Administrative controls are procedures that can be implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, which include:

- Hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette (cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing).
- The use of non-medical masks and face coverings can be an additional measure taken to protect others around you. This is in addition to proper cough and sneeze etiquette, even if you have no symptoms.
- Allow for 2 metres of distance of space to reduce human-to-human transmission.
- Increase disinfection for shared work surfaces and equipment and tools, including shared vehicles.
- Alternating work schedules to reduce the number of people in an area.

Personal Protective Equipment is the last resort of mitigation strategy and includes using PPE for protection against transmission such, as wearing masks, respirators, gowns or aprons, gloves, goggles and/or face-shields. The use of PPE is required in high-risk situations, such as dealing with infectious people.

PPE is used to protect you from possible exposure and should not be confused with non-medical masks or face coverings. The latter are designed to protect others around you and don't provide personal protection. Please see **Use of non-medical face masks and coverings** in the Safe Work Practices section below.

COVID-19 PPE Requirements at NIC

	Low Risk Employees who typically have no contact with infected people.	Moderate risk Employees who may be exposed to infected people from time to time in relatively large, well-ventilated workspaces	High risk Employees who may have contact with infected patients or with infected people in small, poorly ventilated workspaces
Disposable gloves	Not required	Not required, Unless handling disinfectants, then use as outlined in chemical Safety Data Sheet	Yes, in some cases, such as when working directly with infected patients. When handling disinfectants, then use as outlined in chemical Safety Data Sheet
Aprons, gowns, or similar body protection	Not required	Not required	Yes, in some cases, such as when working directly with infected patients.
Eye protection – goggles or face shield	Not required	Not required Unless handling disinfectants, then use as outlined in chemical Safety Data Sheet	Yes, in some cases, such as when working directly with infected patients.
Airway protection – respirators	Not required	Not required	Yes Minimum N95 respirator or equivalent

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Workplace accommodations are in place to ensure proper physical distancing can occur for all employees. Measures include working from home, changes to office schedules and allocation, schedule rotations, and installation of engineered material where required.

For some employees, this may involve continuing to work from home to ensure physical distancing. For others, it may involve working with their supervisor to coordinate available office space or worksite Health and Safety accommodations. Please contact your supervisor if you are unsure of the process in your area.



Restricted College Access

Physical access to NIC facilities has been restricted in order to mitigate risks of COVID-19 transmission. The following measures have been put in place:

- All keyed exterior doors are now locked;
- All exterior electronic lock access points are locked to the public, but those with key fobs (all employees) have access;
- Staff have access to office areas via key fob's and hard keys;
- Facilities and the Manager of Health and Safety will determine how best to manage student access for on-campus classes, on a case-by-case basis.

Enhanced Cleaning Schedule

NIC has increased and enhanced the cleaning protocols for all campus locations. This includes twice daily cleaning of common, frequently touched surfaces (see Appendix A). With fewer employees on campus; offices, classrooms, labs, shops and meeting rooms now have door signs to indicate when spaces have been used and need to be cleaned.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing, proper coughing and sneezing etiquette, and not touching your face are the key to the prevention of transmission and therefore minimize the likelihood of infection.

Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body – particularly the eyes, nose and mouth – or to other surfaces that are touched.

Wash your hands “well” and “often” with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice). If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands.

“Often” includes:

- upon arriving and when leaving work
- after coughing or sneezing
- after bathroom use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating any food (including snacks)
- before using shared equipment

“Well” means:

- wet hands and apply soap
- rub hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds ensuring the lather covers all areas – palm to palm, back of hands, between fingers, back of fingers, thumbs, fingernails (using palm) and wrists
- rinse hand thoroughly with water
- dry your hands with paper towel (or a hand dryer), use the paper towel to turn off the tap and open the door, dispose of the paper towel

Additionally:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands

Resource: please see the Ministry of Health poster

Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Hand Hygiene

SOAP OR ALCOHOL-BASED
HAND RUB: Which is best?

Either will clean your hands:
use soap and water if hands
are visibly soiled.



Remove hand and wrist jewellery

HOW TO HAND WASH



1
Wet hands with warm (not hot or cold) running water



2
Apply liquid or foam soap



3
Lather soap covering all surfaces of hands for 20-30 seconds



4
Rinse thoroughly under running water



5
Pat hands dry thoroughly with paper towel



6
Use paper towel to turn off the tap

HOW TO USE HAND RUB



1
Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, follow hand washing steps)



2
Apply about a loonie-sized amount to your hands



3
Rub all surfaces of your hand and wrist until completely dry (15-20 seconds)

COVID_14_01





Cough/Sneeze Etiquette

All employees are expected to follow cough/sneeze etiquette, which are a combination of preventative measures that minimizes the transmission of diseases via droplet or airborne routes. Cough/sneeze etiquette includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing to reduce the spread of germs
- Use tissues to contain secretions, and immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing

Use of N95 Respirators

The N95 mask is typically worn by workers directly involved in an **aerosol** generating medical procedure (as defined by Health Canada). An N95 mask is a protective barrier that is worn on the face, covers at least the nose and mouth, and is used to contain large droplets generated during coughing and sneezing. N95s help minimize the spread of potentially infectious material. **N95 masks must be fit tested.**

Medical masks and N95 respirators should be reserved for healthcare workers. If you are healthy, wearing a cloth mask is a personal choice. Some people can spread the virus when they have very mild symptoms or may be unaware they are infected. In this case, wearing a mask can help in containing a person's own droplets and protect others but it will not protect the wearer from COVID-19. Masks may give a person a false sense of security and are likely to increase the number of times a person will touch their own face (e.g., to adjust the mask). Any use of masks must also be done in conjunction with proper hand washing and physical distancing.

The use of a homemade mask should only be considered by members of the public who are symptomatic or caring for someone who is symptomatic as an interim measure if commercial masks are not available.

Use of non-medical face masks and coverings

Wearing a homemade facial covering/non-medical mask in the community *has not been proven to protect the person wearing it* and is not a substitute for physical distancing and hand washing.

However, it can be an additional measure taken to protect others around you, even if you have no symptoms. It can be useful for short periods of time, when physical distancing is not possible in public settings, such as when grocery shopping or using public transit.

Appropriate use of non-medical mask or face covering

When worn properly, a person wearing a non-medical mask or face covering can reduce the spread of his or her own respiratory droplets (infectious or not).



Non-medical face masks or face coverings **should**:

- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- maintain their shape after washing and drying
- be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- be made of at least 2 layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

Some masks also include a pocket to accommodate a paper towel or disposable coffee filter, for increased benefit.

Non-medical masks or face coverings **should not**:

- be shared with others
- impair vision or interfere with tasks
- be placed on children under the age of 2 years
- be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials
- be secured with tape or other inappropriate materials
- be made exclusively of materials that easily fall apart, such as tissues
- be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing
- be placed on desks or other surfaces once used/soiled as this can lead to cross-contamination

Limitations

Homemade masks are not medical devices nor personal protective equipment and are not regulated like medical masks and respirators. Their use poses a number of limitations:

- they have not been tested to recognized standards
- the fabrics are not the same as used in surgical masks or respirators
- the edges are not designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth
- they may not provide complete protection against virus-sized particles
- they can be difficult to breathe through and can prevent you from getting the required amount of oxygen needed by your body

These types of masks may not be effective in blocking virus particles. They do not provide complete protection from virus particles due to a potential loose fit and the materials used.

Medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (like N95 masks), must be kept for health care workers and others *providing direct care to COVID-19 patients*.

(Source: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html#_Appropriate_non-medical_mask)



Implementing Safe Work Practices

Additional safe work practices are being developed as NIC responds as part of the COVID-19 response. These practices are department specific and are highly dependent on the type of work being done. Each department will be required to perform a risk assessment to identify risk level for tasks performed by employees. The risk assessment will be used to determine if there are any specific safe work practices required for that task or work area.

NIC has implemented general safety protocols that apply to all staff and students, and are attached as **Appendix B**.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NIC in response to the COVID-19 virus has established the following means of sharing information across the organization:

- COVID-19 information button on NIC main webpage
- COVID-19 information page on NIC Health and Safety portal site
- All NIC employees' emails and other correspondence related to COVID-19

Administrative leads are responsible for the education, orientation and documentation of their employee's knowledge and understanding of this safety plan.

As COVID-19 is a public health matter, information noted above is intended for all employees.

HEALTH MONITORING

Staff concerned that they may have come into contact with someone who may be ill, are to take the following actions:

1. Report the incident to your supervisor and/or healthandsafety@nic.bc.ca
2. Call BC's HealthLink at 8-1-1 to share information regarding the incident and determine if any action needs to be taken.
3. Do not report to work if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

A student that has been to the campus within the last 14 days and begins to show possible symptoms of COVID-19 is required to go home and call 8-1-1. The student should follow the direction of 8-1-1 and not return to campus for 14 days or until symptoms completely go away.

All staff and students that are coming to campus in person need to self-assess daily. Please see the pre-screening questions in **Appendix B**.

In the case of a positive test for COVID-19, public health officials will be in contact with both the person who tested positive, and the College. They will determine who needs to be in 14-day self-isolation, and what other steps the College needs to take for the safety of others.

If you're feeling stressed or worried, please remember that the following resources are available for:

1. NIC's Employees:
https://mynic.nic.bc.ca/employee_resources/hr/benefits/health/Pages/default.aspx
2. NIC's Students:
<https://here2talk.ca/>
<https://www.we.org/en-CA/get-doing/activities-and-resources/wellbeing/>

The Red Cross also has information about [preparing emotionally for disaster and emergencies](#).

RECORD KEEPING

Records shall be kept as per NIC's already established processes.



APPENDIX A: CLEANING FREQUENCY AT NIC

These recommendations are based on the BCCDC document for cleaning clinical settings found below.

Shared equipment during face-to-face class:

Frequency: In between students

Examples: TBD by each program/class

Responsible: Students after each use (enforced by instructors)

Frequently-touched surfaces:

Frequency: At least twice per day

Examples: washrooms, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, etc.

Responsible: Cleaning Contractor

General cleaning of classrooms, shops, labs with face-to-face instruction:

Frequency: Once per day

Examples: Chairs, tables, floors, hallways (others as identified by Faculty/department based on type of activity).

Responsible: Cleaning Contractor




Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Environmental Cleaning and Disinfectants for Clinic Settings

Cleaning: the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g., dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from cleaning cloth.

Disinfection: the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects; never on the human body.

All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before disinfection.

Environmental cleaning for COVID-19 virus is the same as for other common viruses. Cleaning products and disinfectants that are regularly used in hospitals and health care settings are strong enough to deactivate coronaviruses and prevent their spread. Cleaning of visibly soiled surfaces followed by disinfection is recommended for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses.

Suggested cleaning and disinfecting frequencies for clinic settings:

Type of surface	Frequency
1. Shared equipment Examples: stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, baby scales, table and exam beds	IN BETWEEN PATIENTS
2. Frequently-touched surfaces Examples: medical equipment, door knobs, light switches, telephones, keyboards, mice, pens, charts, cell phones, toys, bathrooms	AT LEAST TWICE A DAY
3. General cleaning of procedure / exam rooms Examples: chairs, tables, floors	AT LEAST TWICE A DAY

For electronic equipment please comply with manufacturer's instructions to not void the warranty.




If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.

Non-medical inquiries (ex. travel, physical distancing): **1-888-COVID19 (1888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300**

IPC v2.1





APPENDIX B: COVID -19 GENERAL SAFETY PROTOCOLS

As North Island College students and employees gradually return to campus, the following safety protocols have been created to reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

These general protocols will accompany specific program, cohort and campus safety plans, developed in consultation with public health guidance, to ensure a safe and healthy return to on-campus operations for everyone.

PREVENTION MEASURES

Pre-Screening Questions

Please read the pre-screening questions in **Attachment A** each day prior to coming to campus. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions in **Attachment A** please stay home. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, please contact 8-1-1 and follow their guidance.

Physical distancing

All students and employees will be required to maintain a two-metre distance (at least two arms lengths) from others.

Hand hygiene

Good hand hygiene is important. As one of the most effective ways to reduce the virus’ spread, public health recommends washing your hands well and often, coughing and sneezing into your elbow, or a tissue that can be thrown away immediately, and not touching your face as the keys to the transmission prevention.

This includes washing your hands as per the following directions:

- Washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Washing upon arriving and when leaving campus
- After coughing, sneezing or using the bathroom
- Before, during and after preparing, handling, serving or eating food
- Before using shared equipment
- After disposing of garbage or dirty laundry
- When hands are visibly dirty

Cleaning and disinfection

NIC has increased the cleaning frequency of classrooms and frequently touched surfaces during the pandemic, as follows:

	Shared equipment	Frequently touched surfaces	General classrooms, shops, labs with face to face instruction
Frequency	Between use	At least twice / day	Daily
Responsible	Equipment users (students, with faculty direction)	Janitorial contractor	Janitorial contractor



Example	Unique to individual classes, areas, to be determined by each program/course	door knobs, light switches, bathrooms, etc.	Chairs, tables, floors, etc. based on activity and use
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Signage

Colour-coded signs will inform students and employees on the status of a space. Green signs will mean the area has been cleaned and is ready to use, while red signs will indicate the area has been used and is awaiting cleaning.

VIRUS SPREAD, EXPOSURE, INCUBATION

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person through the following measures:

1. Spread:

- Respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- The droplets land on surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, counters) and contaminate them AND/OR
- If the person coughs or sneezes into their hands, they can transfer the virus onto things they touch.

2. Exposure:

Another person can be exposed to the virus if:

- They are within two metres of the ill person and inhale infected droplets OR
- Touching something that has the infected droplets on it (i.e. doorknob, light switch) and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

3. Incubation:

- The exposed person may get sick with COVID-19 up to 14 days after exposure.
- If they become sick with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, cough, muscle aches, difficulty breathing, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea), that person can start spreading the virus in the environment.
- It may be possible to spread the virus even when someone has no visible symptoms.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition, the following BC Centre for Disease Control resources are available. Please click the links below for larger versions and printable pdfs.

- [CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION](#)
- [PHYSICAL DISTANCING](#)
- [HAND HYGIENE](#)

ATTACHMENT A: PRE-SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. Are you experiencing any of the following flu-like symptoms?

- Fever or chills
- Cough (new or worsening)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath (new or worsening)
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Stuff or runny nose
- New loss of sense of smell or taste
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Chest pain or pressure
- Loss of speech or movement
- Malaise (severe fatigue, muscle aches, feeling or being unwell)

2. Within the last 14 days, have you:

- Travelled to any countries outside of Canada (including the United States)?
- Live with or been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 (presumed or confirmed)?
- Been in close contact with someone who has travelled outside of Canada (including the United States) in the past 14 days who has become ill?

APPENDIX C: NIC'S "WORK FROM HOME" PROCEDURES

Safe Work Procedure: Temporary remote work telecommuting - employees working from home during emergency and/or extraordinary situations

Departments Involved: All North Island College Departments Revision Level: 1

OH&S Authorization: Gerald Van De Ven, CRSP Date: May 28, 2020

1.0 SCOPE

This safe work procedure will be used by all North Island College (NIC) employees whose position allows them to work from home during emergency and/or extraordinary situations. It should be used as a guideline on how to safely work from home.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 In certain emergency or extraordinary situations, the College may authorize an employee to temporarily telecommute from home or another suitable location.
- 2.2 Emergency or extraordinary situations may include temporary interruption of work due to campus closure or partial closure from safety or health measures that are put into effect by the College, or from other reasons such as a public emergency, worksite closure or road closure.
- 2.3 This procedure applies to those emergency or extraordinary situations that may arise and require temporary telecommuting.
- 2.4 If the employee is able to report to work the following telecommuting guidelines apply. If the employee is or becomes sick, the employee will not commence or continue telecommuting until well and should report their illness to their supervisor.

3.0 DETAILS

- 3.1 An employee normally performs work at their assigned campus, at other premises operated by the College or at locations where they have been authorized to travel to conduct the College's business
- 3.2 An employee who is employed in senior management, administration, faculty and vocational instructional positions may also perform work from their home at their discretion with the approval of their designated supervisor.



Temporary Telecommuting:

- 3.3 Temporary telecommuting is an arrangement under which an employee may work at a location other than their assigned campus due an emergency or extraordinary situation that prevents the employee from working at their assigned campus. In such cases, the employee may be specifically authorized or required to perform work from the employee's home or another suitable location.
- 3.4 Any employee who works at home or another suitable location must use reasonable caution, procedures and equipment that maintain data storage and transmission security.
- 3.5 A temporary telecommuting arrangement may be terminated by the College by providing reasonable notice to the employee.

4.0 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 A supervisor may initiate the request for temporary telecommuting or an employee may apply for temporary telecommuting in writing to their designated supervisor.
- 4.2 An employee must have their supervisor's approval and the approval of the appropriate Senior Leadership Team member and Human Resources for temporary telecommuting.
- 4.3 If temporary telecommuting is approved it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that:
 - i. The College's rules, regulations, policies and collective agreements are adhered to;
 - ii. The employee will not hold business visits or meetings with colleagues, students or the public in their home;
 - iii. The employee agrees to maintain appropriate safety practices during the time worked. The employee must follow safe work practices and promptly report any work-related accident that occurs at the telework (home) office to their supervisor and/or appropriate employer representative. The employer will not be responsible for any non-work related injuries that may occur at home.
 - iv. The employee assumes primary responsibility for maintaining effective communication and work flow among co-workers and students (as applicable to role); the supervisor and employee share the responsibility for effective communication with each other.
 - v. The employee shall have regularly scheduled work hours agreed upon with the supervisor, including specific core hours and telephone accessibility. Communication by telephone and electronic mail with the College must be available during work hours and voice mail and email must be checked regularly. Adherence to the employee's normal days and hours of work is expected unless other schedules have been discussed and agreed to with the employee's supervisor. The work schedule shall be consistent with the operational needs of the employee's department;
 - vi. If conditions permit, the employee will attend job-related meetings, training sessions and conferences, as requested by their supervisor; notice for such attendance may be short but reasonable to account for employee circumstances (i.e. access to a vehicle);



- vii. All College materials are treated in confidence and are maintained in a safe and secure manner;
- viii. All College equipment is kept secure and is used for College business only. Any equipment supplied by the College must be returned to the College upon termination of the temporary telecommuting arrangement;
- ix. An employee in a position where overtime may be applicable must have advance written approval from their supervisor to work overtime;
- x. All incidental costs, such as residential utility costs, cleaning, internet and so forth are the responsibility of the employee; and
- xi. The telecommuting employee will not be paid mileage involved in travel between the employee’s home or other suitable location and the employee’s assigned campus.
- xii. The telecommuting employee and supervisor will establish appropriate daily “check in” procedure while working from home.
- xiii. The employee must provide their supervisor with the following details as to location of their remote work location: Address and Phone Number
- xiv. The employee and Supervisor must be clear as to the employee’s work duties and responsibilities while telecommuting.
- xv. Employee status, benefits and leave entitlements, eligibility for authorized overtime and wages/salary are not altered by these temporary telecommuting arrangements.

5.0 HAZARDS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomics • Repetitive Tasks • Working Alone • Stress • Emergency situations – Injury, Fire, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electrical - Lighting - Slip and trip hazards, etc.
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6.0 CONTROL MEASURES REQUIRED

Engineered Controls:

- Ideally the home office environment will be arranged to provide a safe ergonomic set up as shown in Fig. 1. & 2.

Administrative Controls:

- Worker training on ergonomic hazards as per this procedure section 5.1 & 5.2.
- Work/ Rest Schedule - adequate stretch breaks. (sect. 5.3)
- Reporting processes for reporting of injuries (sect. 5.7)
- Working Alone communication system (as described in this procedure, sect. 5.3)

Personal Protective Equipment: Work activities done from home should not include tasks that are high or moderate risk level or that would require the use of personal protective equipment.

7.0 SAFE WORK PROCEDURE

7.1 Workstation Set-up

Environmental hazards - Prior to setting up your work area, do an inspection to identify hazards in the surrounding area that could potentially cause an injury or issues:

- Identify slip and trip areas - beware of obstructions and trip hazards such as flooring transition areas, extension cords, loose carpets, tiles and uneven floor surfaces.
- If you are exposed to hazards or irritants such as tobacco smoke, cooking odors or other irritants in the area/neighborhood - make the necessary adjustments to reduce or eliminate your exposure.
- Excessive noise or other distractions must be reduced or removed from the environment.
- Workload, distractions and competing priorities can affect your ability to work effectively and efficiently. Do your best to function in a clean, distraction free area and set up a defined work schedule that includes regular breaks.
- Electrical Safety - Always use 3-prong grounded electrical outlets or a surge-protected power bar to prevent the risk of an electrical shock. If using a power cord, check that it is in a good condition and not broken or scorched.
- Lighting - Ensure you work in a well-lit area that can ensure good visibility of the computer screen and not strain eye sight. Avoid placing the computer directly in front of a window as the backlight will create eye strain.

7.2 Ergonomics

Considerations must be given to the design and set up of home work stations. When using a laptop or a home computer for long periods of time it is important to have the top of the screen elevated to eye level and the keyboard at elbow level so that your arms and shoulders are relaxed in a neutral position.

Using a laptop stand or “kickstand” with a secondary keyboard tray will raise the monitor to eye level and help to reduce neck and shoulder strain. Attaching a second monitor positioned at a higher level will also work in this manner. See **Fig. 1**.

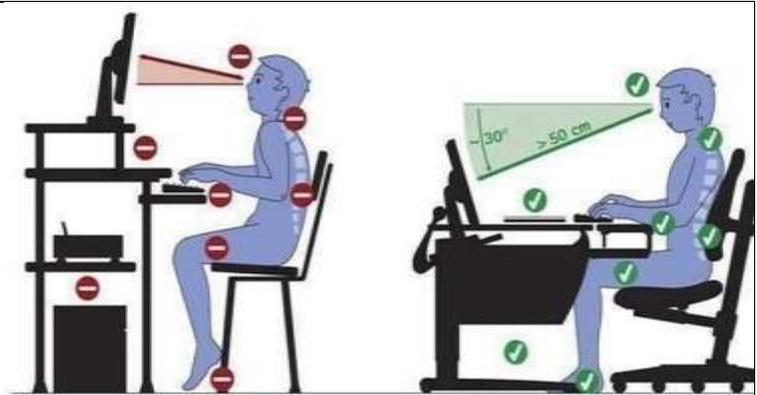
Figure 1.



Figure 2.

COMPUTER WORKSTATION CHECK UP:

- ✓ **elbows in close** ('belly up to keyboard')
- ✓ **hands directly in front** of you (mouse?)
- ✓ **wrists** almost straight (keyboard height?)
- ✓ **chin tucked** in, (vision?)
- ✓ **head slightly** tilted down (monitor height?)
- ✓ **head not turned** (prime monitor/documents in line?)
- ✓ **support** in the 'small of your back' (chair back?)
- ✓ **feet supported** on the ground, room to stretch out (junk?)
- ✓ **swivel** your whole chair when reaching round (space?)
- ✓ take frequent **breaks and s-t-r-e-t-c-h**



Regular stretch breaks are recommended
 (Appendix A.)



Important Ergonomic Tips:

- Be cautious about **monitor height**: the recommendation is the TOP of the screen at eye level, adjusting the screen too high can result in neck strain.
- Be cautious about **screen distance** - the 'arm's length' is a guideline only - people have differing focal lengths, depending on age and eyewear correction, so the main thing is to adjust the distance so as to avoid peering (leaning forward to see clearly) or reaching (leaning back and extending the arms) instead of keeping your elbows by your sides.
- Adjust the **back support in your chair** if you can to provide support in the 'small' of your back. If lumbar support is not available tape a cushion in place. And sit right back into the chair!
- If using a laptop, setting up a **secondary monitor or keyboard** (i.e. separating the keyboard from the screen) can make all these adjustments more possible.

7.3 Working Alone- WorkSafeBC requires that employees in isolation check in to confirm they are safe. By definition, in the BC OHS Regulations "to work alone or in isolation" means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker (a) in case of an emergency, or (b) in case the worker is injured or in ill health. If you are in this situation, at a minimum, a check in is required with your supervisor at the beginning of your work day/shift and at the end of your shift.

7.4 Stress- Working from home can create many challenges. It is important to attempt to separate the work space from other home activities. Try to avoid distractions such as personal phones and televisions. Efforts should be made to set boundaries with others such as family members and pets to avoid distractions. Setting up a specific time frame to conduct work, including taking regular breaks, is important and will help to ensure that you are able to separate your work from your daily home life and maintain a healthy balance.

7.5 Repetitive Tasks- Staying in the same position and using the same muscles for hours at a time can cause discomfort and can lead to musculoskeletal injuries. To prevent this from occurring, take frequent and brief rest breaks:

- **Eye breaks:** Briefly look away from the computer screen for a minute or two to a more distant scene, approx. 20 feet away every 20 minutes. This lets the muscles inside the eye relax. Also, blink your eyes rapidly for a few seconds. This refreshes the tear film and clears dust from the eye surface.
- **Micro-breaks:** Micro-breaks are less than two minutes long and perfect to do between bouts of typing. Most people type in bursts rather than continuously. Between these bursts of activity, rest your hands in a relaxed, flat, straight posture.
- **Stretch breaks:** There are many stretching and gentle exercises that you can do to help relieve muscle fatigue. It is recommended that you take micro stretch breaks every twenty minutes and take a longer stretch break every one to two hours. **See Appendix A.**

7.6 Emergency Preparedness & Fire Protection- Review the information below (Table 1.0- Emergency Preparedness) and know your responsibilities as an employee so you'll be prepared in the event of an emergency, regardless of your work location.

Table 1.0 Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Kit	Prepare an emergency kit with basics such as water, food, medications, light, money and contact lists and store it in an accessible location.
Fire/Smoke Alarms	Ensure that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors work.
First Aid	Maintain a basic first aid kit and report all injuries to your supervisor immediately.
Contacts	Maintain a list of numbers for contact, including Supervisor, Manager, Co-Workers, Clinics and 9-1-1.
Evacuation Plan	Create an evacuation plan that outlines where to evacuate (include emergency exits) and who to contact in emergencies.

7.7 Injury Reporting Process

All employees who experience a work-related injury while working from home are to immediately notify their Supervisor and are to follow NIC's Injury Reporting process.

8.0 DOCUMENT CHANGE MANAGEMENT

DOCUMENT CHANGE MANAGEMENT:			
Revision No.	Date	Description of Change	Change made by (name and title)
	March 19, 2020	Initial release of Temporary Remote Work/Telecommuting Procedures - Emergency or Extraordinary Situations	Developed by Ken Crewe, Director Human Resources & Organizational Development
1	May 28, 2020	Revision based on WSBC COVID-19 Safety Plan	Gerald Van De Ven, Health and Safety Manager Melanie Charles, Health and Safety Advisor

DESK STRETCHES

These are stretches to do at your desk.
This program will take 2 1/2 – 3 min.

- Breathe easily
- No bouncing or forcing
- No pain!
- *Feel* the stretch
- Relax
- See Stretching Instructions, pp. 77–84

1
5 sec, 3 times
p. 82



2
5 sec, 3 times
p. 82



3
5 sec, 2 times
p. 81



4
5 sec, 2 times
p. 84



5
5 sec
p. 84



6
5 sec
each side
p. 84



7
5 sec
p. 84



8
10 sec
each arm
p. 81



9
10 sec
p. 82



10
10 sec
p. 81



11
9 sec
each side
p. 82



12
10 sec
p. 79



- Prolonged sitting at a desk or computer terminal can cause muscular tension and pain.
- Taking a few minutes to do a series of stretches can make your whole body feel better.
- Learn to stretch spontaneously throughout the day whenever you feel tense.
- Don't just do seated stretches, but do some standing stretches too. Good for circulation.

From: Getting Into Shape – Shelter Productions Ltd.