

COVID-19 Safety Plan Stewardship Activities

Purpose

To provide guidelines for minimizing the risk of COVID-19 exposure during stewardship activities to ensure a safe work environment for Metro Vancouver Regional Parks staff and volunteers.

1. Risk Assessment

Stewardship activities such as tree plantings, invasive plant removals, and wildlife monitoring are led by Metro Vancouver parks staff (*e.g.* a Natural Resource Management Technician) and include a group of volunteers working together outdoors in the same location. Identified below are areas and situations where the risk of COVID-19 transmission exists either through close proximity or contaminated surfaces.

Restoration sites: All stewardship activities take place outdoors where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is reduced due to the ease of physical distancing and open air ventilation. Movement pathways at each site can be evaluated prior to the start of each event to identify potential pinch points.

Registration, introductions, and breaks: Volunteers often congregate during registration, introductions, and breaks. Staff, with the aid of signage and place markers, will remind participants of Metro Vancouver's COVID-19 policies and protocols on physical distancing, hand washing and good hygiene. Hand sanitizer will be available at the registration table and volunteers will be instructed to disinfect their hands upon arrival. Any common surfaces such as tables, clipboards, and pens will be disinfected at the start and end of each event. Volunteers will be encouraged to bring their own water and snacks, and pack out any garbage.

Work gloves and tools: All work gloves and tools will be cleaned and disinfected by staff prior to the start of each event. For restoration plantings, invasive plant removals, and habitat maintenance, there will be sufficient tools (*e.g.* shovels, pruners, loppers, *etc.*) to assign each participant with their own. Consequently, tools will not be shared for these events.

Monitoring activities and equipment: Monitoring activities involve very small groups (*e.g.* 2-6 people) and may utilize specialized equipment with potentially high-touch surfaces (*e.g.* GPS units, iPads, sampling poles, data loggers). The low number of participants reduces the risk of person-to-person and surface transmission, and individuals can be assigned specific roles to minimize equipment sharing. If equipment must be shared, it will be disinfected between users.

2. Protocols

Physical Distancing (Metro Vancouver, 2020)

- Stewardship events will be limited to activities where the worksite and the nature of work allow for staff and volunteers to maintain a distance of 2 meters (6 feet).
- Although, the Provincial Health Order presently allows for groups of 50 people or fewer, group sizes for stewardship activities will be set at a level where physical distancing can be effectively carried out, but not exceeding 50 people.
- All stewardship activities will occur outdoors.
- Staff will consider movement pathways to identify and minimize pinch points.
- Volunteers will be required to RSVP prior to all events to ensure that group size limits are not exceeded.
- Staff will inform volunteers of COVID-19 measures during recruitment and at the start of each stewardship event (*e.g.* tailboard meeting). Signage may be posted if necessary.
- Volunteers will be reminded that if they are at greater risk (over the age of 60 or with underlying medical conditions), they think through their risk tolerance and take extra precautions (BC Government, 2020).

Hand Washing and Hygiene

- An alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) with at least 60% alcohol will available at every stewardship event (Metro Vancouver, 2020; PHAC, 2020).
- For visibly soiled hands, dirt should be removed with a hand wipe first, followed by an ABHS (PHAC, 2020).
- If available, hand washing with warm water and soap for 20 seconds is preferred.
- Staff and volunteers must wash or disinfect hands:
 - Upon arriving at a worksite;
 - Before and after breaks (*e.g.* washroom, food or water breaks);
 - Before and after handling common items and tools (*e.g.* signing in);
 - After a stewardship activity.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Tools

- Volunteers will be provided with a clean pair of work gloves (*e.g.* Showa latex-lined gloves) at the start of each stewardship event. They will be encouraged to wear them while working and throughout the event.
- Wearing a non-medical or cloth mask will be a matter of personal choice and will not be provided by Metro Vancouver.
- Participants may bring their own non-medical masks, and wear the masks during the activity.
- Volunteers will be assigned their own tool(s) to minimize the sharing of equipment (*e.g.* shovels, pruners, loppers).
- Tools will be labelled so that volunteers can keep track of the one they are using.
- If shared equipment is to be used, it must be disinfected between users.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Gloves, Tools, and Equipment by Staff

- All used gloves, tools and equipment will be cleaned and disinfected by staff at the end of each stewardship activity.
- For approved disinfectants, check [Health Canada's list \(2020\)](#).
- Alternatively, a diluted bleach solution can be used for disinfection. Refer to the [BCCDC recommended bleach to water ratios and cleaning time chart \(2020\)](#).

Work gloves (BCCDC, 2020):

- Volunteers are to deposit work gloves in a designated plastic bag or plastic-lined bin after use.
- Staff is to wear disposable nitrile gloves when washing dirty work gloves at the service yard.
- Do not shake dirty items.
- Wash with laundry detergent and hot water (60-90°C) after each use.
- Staff is to wash hands with soap and water after removing disposable nitrile gloves.

Tools (BCCDC, 2020):

- Tools are to be disinfected before the start of each stewardship activity (*e.g.* 500 ppm bleach solution and left to air dry).
- After each stewardship activity, used tools are to be brought back to the service yard for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Staff is to wear disposable nitrile gloves and eye protection if cleaning may result in splashing or aerosol-generating contaminants.
- Wash and/or wipe off all dirt.
- Once the dirt is removed, disinfect with an approved product or diluted bleach solution as recommended by the manufacturer or [BCCDC](#), respectively.
- Store tools until the next stewardship activity.
- Staff is to wash hands with soap and water after removing nitrile gloves.

Equipment (BCCDC, 2020; Metro Vancouver, 2020):

- Disinfect all equipment at the start and end of each stewardship activity (*e.g.* table, totes, clipboards, *etc.*) using Health Canada's approved product or diluted bleach solution and disposable nitrile gloves
- Check the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Staff is to wear disposable nitrile glove and eye protection if cleaning may result in splashing or aerosol-generating contaminants.

Waste:

- Encourage volunteers to pack out all waste or dispose it in designated garbage bins.

Potential COVID-19 Tracing

- All volunteers must sign in at the start of each stewardship event.
- Full names and contact information must be provided in case contact tracing is required (e.g. email and/or phone number). If this information is not provided, then the individual will not be allowed to participate in the volunteer event.
- Participants must also check off on the sign-in form that they have read and/or are aware of Metro Vancouver's COVID-19 policy for volunteer work parties.

Refreshments, Food and Water

- Volunteers will be encouraged to bring their own food and water, and take home any garbage.
- Should snacks be provided by staff, it must be individually wrapped and handed out to each volunteer to minimize surface transmission.
- Staff will bring a case of bottled water to each stewardship activity for emergency use only.

First Aid (Metro Vancouver, 2020)

- Minimize unnecessary exposure to the patient by verbally assessing them from a distance of 2 meters, if possible.
- Although participants should already be prescreened for the event, double-check to make sure they are not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days.
- If patient is not able to self-treat under your direction, apply the following treatment procedures:
 - Put on disposable nitrile gloves, and disposable mask;
 - If possible, give the patient a disposable mask to wear while you provide first aid;
 - Continue with patient assessment and treatment as per normal protocols;
 - If patient is unresponsive, call 9-1-1 immediately and report their travel history if known;
 - If CPR is required, perform compression-only CPR;
 - Document all assessments in First Aid Record.

3. Policy

Metro Vancouver's COVID-19 Responsibilities and Absences From Work (Temporary Policy) should guide staff's issues and concerns during the pandemic.

As set out in the British Columbia *Worker's Compensation Act*, employers and employees have a collective duty to maintain a safe workplace, and a collective obligation to keep our communities safe as best we can.

- Metro Vancouver Regional Parks staff and volunteers must complete a Personal Health Check before attending a stewardship event. The full self-assessment tool is available online at: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>.

- Participants will be asked not to attend a stewardship activity if they are:
 - Exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms in the last 10 days such as fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache;
 - Under the direction of the provincial health officer to self-isolate;
 - Arrived from outside of Canada in the last 14 days;
 - In close contact with someone who has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

4. Communication and Training

- All parks staff and park partners who organize stewardship activities in Metro Vancouver Regional Parks must review the COVID-19 Safety Plan – Stewardship Activities prior to running an event.
- Potential volunteers will be informed of Metro Vancouver’s COVID-19 measures in advance of a scheduled event (*i.e.* during recruitment).
- Metro Vancouver’s COVID-19 policy (*e.g.* Personal Health Check), along with protocols on physical distancing and good hygiene, will be posted at the registration table.
- Staff will also remind volunteers of existing COVID-19 measures at the start of each stewardship event.
- Volunteers will be asked to check off that they have read and/or are aware of Metro Vancouver’s COVID-19 policy and protocols on the sign-in form.

5. Monitor and Update Plan

- Staff will continually assess work sites and activities for COVID-19 risks, and change procedures as needed.
- Issues and concerns will be shared and discussed with co-workers and supervisors.
- Volunteers are encouraged to provide input.
- Policies and protocols may be updated if necessary.

References

- BC Centre for Disease Control (2020). *Bleach-water ratios table*. <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/bleach-water-ratios-table.pdf>. Accessed June 2, 2020.
- BC Centre for Disease Control (2020). *Cleaning and disinfecting*. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/cleaning-and-disinfecting>. Accessed May 25, 2020.
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- Public Health Agency of Canada (2020). *Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Canada*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/public-health-measures-mitigate-covid-19.html>. Accessed May 25, 2020.
- Work Safe BC (2020). *COVID-19: A guide to reducing risk*. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/covid-19-guide-to-reducing-risk?lang=en>. Accessed May 25, 2020.