

# MHC COVID-19 EXPOSURE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PLAN

To support the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 exposure for all  
individuals accessing the MHC campus

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Medicine Hat College is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment. This exposure prevention plan is applicable to all employees, students, contractors and visitors accessing the college and has been developed to:

- ✓ Minimize the risk of exposure and transmission of the COVID-19 virus on campus.
- ✓ Provide awareness and information regarding the symptoms, and corresponding preventative and control measures to reduce exposure and transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
- ✓ Provide for rapid response if an individual develops symptoms of illness while on campus or if there is a confirmed case linked to MHC.
- ✓ Communicate and outline expectations of all persons accessing the campus.

## PANDEMICS AND COVID-19

Pandemics are worldwide outbreaks of disease such as influenza/virus. Three outbreaks of pandemic influenza (as opposed to seasonal influenza) occurred in the 20th century: 1918 (Spanish influenza), 1957 (Asian influenza), and 1968 (Hong Kong influenza). The World Health Organization assessed the outbreak of COVID-19 and declared it a global pandemic due to the rate at which the virus can spread and the risk of severe outcomes.

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. COVID-19 is a new strain of Coronaviruses that has not been previously identified in humans and causes an infection of the nose, throat and lungs.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

MHC is committed to protecting the health of employees, students, contractors and visitors. Employees and students shall be made aware of the potential risks of the COVID-19 virus and protect themselves by following the precautions that are outlined in this Exposure Prevention Plan.

### **MHC – Employer**

- Support and communicate the importance of compliance with the COVID-19 Virus Exposure Prevention Plan.

### **Health and Safety Office**

- Develop, maintain, and promote the Exposure Prevention Plan.
- Recommend and complete updates as necessary.
- Act as a resource on implementation of the plan.
- Assist with the response to a confirmed case or outbreak on campus.
- Notify Alberta Health Services if there are two or more students or staff that have become symptomatic or if there are confirmed cases with a known link.

### **Joint Health and Safety Committee**

- Review the Exposure Prevention Plan and provide feedback as necessary.
- Provide updated information and input regarding COVID-19 prevention and response.
- Provide recommendations and assistance in the event of a confirmed case on campus.

### **Supervisors, Contractors**

- Ensure employees and students have awareness of the Exposure Prevention Plan.
- Complete the Health & Safety Risk Mitigation Plan when planning face-to-face activities.
- Support and communicate this plan within their area of responsibility.
- Monitor the workplace to ensure that safeguards are used, precautions are taken, and work procedures are followed.
- Ensure that employees or students who have or develop symptoms of COVID-19 stay home, use the AHS Self-Assessment tool and follow the directions from AHS.

- Provide support to staff or students in meeting the requirements of this plan.

### **Students, Employees, Contractors**

- Be familiar with the Exposure Prevention Plan.
- Attend awareness and education sessions, when provided or required.
- Stay up to date with developments related to COVID-19.
- Follow preventative measures such as physical distancing, frequent hand washing, covering coughs/sneezes and avoid touching face, and any related safe work procedures.
- Use any required Personal Protective Equipment if identified in the hazard assessment.
- Self-monitor for symptoms and follow the public health orders and AHS guidance for reporting, testing and isolation/quarantine.
- Stay home if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms and report to supervisor/instructor as soon as possible.
- Follow the applicable guidelines for practicum and/or working in healthcare settings.
- Follow the guidance provided by MHC in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## **RISK IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT**

The risk identification and exposure assessment is based on the following factors:

### **Health Hazards of COVID-19**

The effects of COVID-19 are expected to be more severe than for seasonal influenza as it has not been previously identified in humans, most people have no immunity to the virus, and there is no vaccine or proven treatment. Most people will recover without needing special treatment. However, it can cause serious illness in some, and there is a risk of death in severe cases.

### **Symptoms**

Symptoms can be mild and are similar to influenza and other respiratory illnesses. They may occur 2-14 days after exposure.

Common symptoms include:

- Fever (over 38degrees)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Runny nose

Other symptoms include:

- Stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell in general
- New fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Lose of sense of smell or taste
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or unexplained loss of appetite)

### **Transmission**

COVID-19 is transmitted through tiny droplets of liquid produced by people who have the virus. The droplets spread by coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing and singing. It can also be spread by touching objects or surfaces that the virus has landed on and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. COVID-19 is not airborne, which means it doesn't stay in the air long and won't go very far.

Proximity with someone with COVID-19 can spread the virus.

## People at Higher Risk

At this time, serious illness appears to develop more often in people who are older or have pre-existing conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes.

## INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

MHC employees and students accessing Medicine Hat College campuses are **required** to abide by the following expectations:

- Campus population is reduced by restricting public access.
- Staff who can work remotely are asked to do so. If work from home is not feasible, individuals should connect with supervisor to arrange to work on campus.
- All individuals accessing MHC should screen daily for COVID-19 symptoms using the [AHS COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).

### Do not come on campus if you are experiencing any symptoms of illness!

- Any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition is required by law to follow Alberta's isolation requirements.
- Employees must notify their supervisor, document their sick time accordingly, and complete the [AHS self-assessment tool](#) to schedule a test.
- Students must notify their instructors and complete the [AHS self-assessment tool](#) to schedule a test.

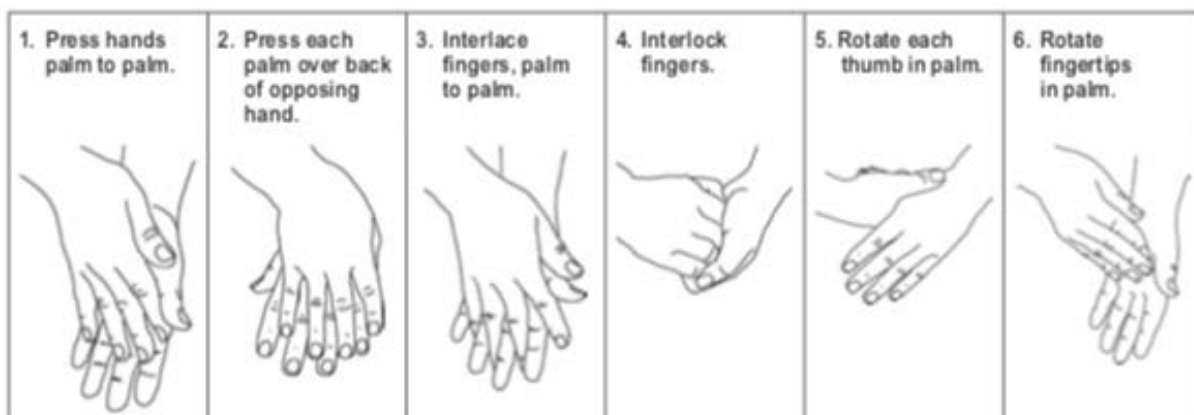
### Follow physical distancing requirements

- As per Provincial Health Orders, keep a minimum of six feet or a two meter distance between yourself and another person.
- Avoid congregating in common rooms or areas (lunchroom, hallways, washroom, etc.).
- Conduct meetings by phone or by making use of technology. In person meetings may occur as long as physical distancing is maintained.
- In a shared office space ensure physical distancing requirements are met between co-workers. Refer to the Health & Safety Risk Mitigation Plan for your work area.

### Personal Hygiene

Good personal hygiene is the key to reduce the risk of infection and transmission of the virus. The following hygiene practices are recommended:

- **Hand washing:** Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk 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 often and well using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based (minimum 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer may be substituted if a hand washing station is not available. These measures are especially important after coming into contact with high touch point surfaces like door handles, railings, elevator buttons, kitchens, and equipment.



- **Cough/sneeze etiquette:** Workers are expected to follow cough/sneeze etiquette, which is a combination of measures that minimize the transmission of diseases via droplet or airborne routes. Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue.

Dispose of used tissues or other articles that have come in contact with fluid from your nose, throat, mouth or eyes into regular waste bins and wash your hands immediately.

1.



Cover your mouth and nose with a paper tissue when you cough or sneeze.



If you don't have a paper tissue, cough/sneeze into your upper sleeve.

2.



Dispose of the tissue in a waste bin after every use.

3.



Wash your hands with soap and water after coughing/sneezing.

- **Personal Protective Equipment:** Use of personal protective equipment may be an effective approach to prevent transmission. Personal protective equipment includes respiratory protection, eye protection and skin protection and will be assigned/evaluated based upon the results of the Risk Assessment and following the requirements outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Management System.

Face Coverings such as cloth masks or non-medical masks are not a method of personal protective equipment. It has not been proven that these masks protect the person wearing it, however it can help protect people from being exposed to your germs. Masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched with hands. It's important that masks are used and disposed of properly. If worn incorrectly, you can accidentally spread infection instead of preventing it. If you choose to wear one of these types of face coverings please refer to the [guidance document](#) for more information.

## Facilities

### *Medicine Hat Campus (as of June 8, 2020)*

- Access is restricted to a single point of entry (Main entrance – South Doors by Security).
- Employees and current students must scan in/out and use hand sanitizer upon entry. By scanning or signing in, individuals are declaring that they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Disinfectant wipes and instructions are placed in areas where there is shared equipment.
- Common areas such as washrooms and high frequency touch points are cleaned daily.
- Offices are cleaned weekly. Cleaning of department-specific high frequency touch points is the responsibility of the department. Cleaning protocols are available on Source and cleaning product may be requested through the Facility Operations office.

### *Brooks Campus (as of June 8, 2020)*

- Campus access is restricted to staff only. Notify the building maintenance operator when accessing campus.
- Persons accessing campus must follow the sign-in process to declare that they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 and to document the day and time of access. Sign in sheets are located at the main office.
- Common areas such as washrooms and high frequency touch points are cleaned daily.

- Department-specific high touchpoint cleaning is the responsibility of the department. Cleaning protocols are available on Source and cleaning products are available in the mailroom.

### Temporary Changes to Policy and Procedure

- International travel for college business is currently suspended.
- Domestic travel within Canada for college business is not advised unless deemed essential.
- The Site Hazard Assessment has been updated and posted on the Health & Safety Source site.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education is crucial for awareness, prevention, early detection, and rapid response. Supervisors shall ensure that employees and students have read and understood this Exposure Prevention Plan.

Employees and students should have sufficient awareness and be able to answer these key questions:

- 1) What is COVID-19 and how is it transmitted?
- 2) What are the symptoms?
- 3) What precautions and control/protective measures are required to prevent infection and transmission?
- 4) What should you do if you are experiencing symptoms?
- 5) Where can you obtain further information and help?

MHC will provide education on COVID-19 prevention by means of campus announcements, website and the COVID Source site. As of June 8, 2020, an online orientation is currently under development.

Individuals are encouraged to use the following websites to acquire general information on COVID-19:

- [Government of Alberta](#)
- [Alberta Health Services/COVID](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

## RAPID RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

<p><b>Staff member/Student has symptoms – calls in sick.</b>  <i>Order 05-2020 legally obligates individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) to be in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. These requirements must be followed regardless of whether or not the individual has been tested for COVID-19.</i></p>	<p><b>Student illness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Upon notification that a student has symptoms the instructor shall encourage them to complete the AHS online self-assessment and get tested for COVID-19.</li> <li>➤ Inform the student how they can continue their learning from home or what arrangements can be made to cover missed instruction.</li> <li>➤ The instructor shall immediately report the illness to the chair/coordinator for their program and the OHS manager.</li> </ul> <p><b>Employee illness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Upon notification that a staff member has symptoms the supervisor shall encourage them to complete the AHS online self-assessment and get tested for COVID-19.</li> <li>➤ The supervisor shall discuss options with the staff member to either continue to work remotely (if possible) or take sick time (if available) The Supervisor shall immediately report the illness to their supervisor and the OHS manager.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff Member/Student comes to campus sick or becomes sick while on campus</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ After being directed to leave campus, symptomatic employees should follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and maintain at least 2 meters of distance from other employees, volunteers and patrons, and should begin isolation at home immediately.</li> <li>➤ Disposable face masks are available at the security desk to further protect from the potential spread of respiratory droplets.</li> <li>➤ The Supervisor/Instructor should make arrangements for transportation home if necessary; public transportation should be avoided.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Supervisor/Instructor should report the incident to their supervisor and OHS manager to initiate the investigation process. They shall also contact Facility Operations to arrange for disinfection of the work area or instructional space. It is important to document the names of all close contacts the ill person may have been in contact with that day and in the 48 hours prior to when the symptoms started. This information may be necessary if the ill person later tests positive for COVID-19. An incident report must be completed by the Supervisor/Instructor and forwarded to the OHS office within 24 hours.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff Member/Student tests positive for COVID-19</b>  <i>Order 05-2020 legally requires individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 to be in isolation for a minimum of 10 days from the start of symptoms or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students should notify the registrar’s office or residence office (if they reside in student residence) of the positive test. Staff should notify their supervisor.</li> <li>➤ If a staff member or student is confirmed to have COVID-19, and it is determined that other people may have been exposed to that person, Alberta Health Services (AHS) may be in contact with MHC to provide the necessary public health guidance. Records may be sought up to two-weeks prior to the individual becoming ill. MHC will work cooperatively with AHS to ensure those potentially exposed to the individual receive the correct guidance.</li> <li>➤ An MHC incident investigation would already be in progress from the initial report of illness.</li> </ul>
<b>AHS Notification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If 2 or more persons become symptomatic and have a known location link, the OHS Manager will notify Alberta Health Services immediately.</li> </ul>

## DOCUMENTATION

Any documentation will be kept following MHC records retention policy.

## REVIEW AND UPDATE

This Exposure Prevention Plan will be reviewed by the Occupational Health and Safety Office in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committees and College Leadership Council:

- ✓ As necessary to reflect the pandemic situation as it evolves
- ✓ As advances in infection control methods develop, including advances in equipment and processes in the workplace
- ✓ At least annually