



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

Communicable Disease Plan

A guide for employees, students and contractors

Based on WorkSafe BC communicable disease prevention: A guide for employees

March 9, 2023

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 3 |
| STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE RISK | 3 |
| STEP 2: MEASURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES TO REDUCE THE RISK | 4 |
| STEP 3: COMMUNICATE MEASURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES | 5 |
| STEP 4: MONITOR YOUR WORKPLACE AND UPDATE PLAN..... | 8 |
| SUPPORT SERVICES & RESOURCES..... | 9 |
| OTHER RESOURCES..... | 10 |
| APPENDIX A: Potential Communicable Disease Descriptions | 11 |
| APPENDIX B: Definitions | 11 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Communicable Disease Plan is designed to promote the health and safety of the Royal Roads University (RRU) community: students, employees, contractors (academic and non-academic contractors) and visitors by providing information that can be used to manage exposure to **Communicable Diseases** (terms in bold are defined in Appendix B) by mitigating risk of transmission and possibility of infection on the university campus and through university activities. This plan also provides guidance for the appropriate response to a communicable disease outbreak.

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another.

This plan falls under the RRU Enterprise Risk Management Framework and the Emergency Planning and Preparedness Program, under the direction of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in collaboration with Human Resources, Faculty Affairs, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC), the Operations and Resilience portfolio (including Safety and Security), Student and Academic Services, Campus Services and Communications and Marketing.

This plan reflects the [BC Occupational Health and Safety \(BC OHS\) Regulations Sections 6.34](#) and is guided by the WorkSafe BC Communicable Disease Prevention four-step process highlighted in [“A guide for employers.”](#)

Within the university community, questions and requests for clarification of information related to this plan should be addressed to the Associate Vice-President (AVP), Operations and Resilience (ops-resilience@royalroads.ca).

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE RISK

In the event of a **Health Emergency**, or heightened risk of health emergency, RRU will work closely with Island Health, notify the RRU community of the emergency, take actions to protect the health and safety of students, employees, contractors and visitors, and provide additional guidance if necessary.

The EOC, sharing information through its membership and the communications team, will alert the campus community about possible communicable disease threats.

Communicable diseases falling within the scope of this plan are those typically caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites and normally spread through direct or indirect human contact or through the consumption of contaminated food/water. Examples of communicable diseases include:

- Coronavirus
- Hepatitis A
- Norovirus
- Measles
- Meningococ
- cal Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis

See Appendix A for details on certain communicable diseases.

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level or within the campus.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the modes of transmission are the first steps in reducing the incidence of disease associated with communicable diseases. Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include fever or chills and other flu-like symptoms: sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, achiness, upset stomach, fatigue and headaches.

When traveling abroad, be aware of communicable disease threats; certain communicable diseases are endemic to certain regions of the world.

Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, innate immunity and/or acquired immunity can provide some protection against certain communicable diseases. Not all communicable diseases are treatable, nor are current treatments guaranteed to protect against a communicable disease.

STEP 2: MEASURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES TO REDUCE THE RISK

It is important to limit the spread of a communicable disease before it has the potential to cause serious illness/disease. Reducing the risk is a layered approach that also includes a combination of best practices. RRU is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all members of the university community and aims to reduce the risk through these ongoing measures:

1. **Hand washing:** Actively promote [hand washing](#) and frequent use of hand sanitizer
2. **Etiquette:** Educate, promote and encourage [proper cough and sneeze etiquette](#)
3. **Cleaning:** Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces
4. **Health and Wellness:** Encourage the practice of a healthy lifestyle, exercise, balanced diet and sufficient sleep.
5. **Handle and prepare food safely:** Keep foods at a correct temperature; cook foods (especially meat) thoroughly; wash produce; and observe expiration dates
6. **Precautions:** Follow universal precautions when conducting first aid
7. **Support community members (students, faculty, staff, contractors and visitors):**
To stay home if they feel ill to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
 - Employees – [Types of Leave Policy](#)
 - Students – [Prevent the spread](#)
 - Associate Faculty – [Health and wellness information](#)
 - Non-academic contractors and visitors – [BCCDC-Do-Not-Enter-Premises](#)
8. **Promote, encourage and support appropriate immunizations.**
 - The university encourages everyone who is eligible and able to consider vaccination to protect yourself and others.

- RRU employees are [entitled to up to three hours of paid leave](#) to be vaccinated against COVID-19, if required.
- RRU regularly hosts annual influenza vaccination clinics on campus for students and employees and may host COVID-19 vaccination clinics on campus for everyone, including the general public.

9. Building ventilation (HVAC Systems)

- At this time, there is no evidence that building ventilation systems in good operating condition contribute to the spread of communicable diseases. Notwithstanding, RRU repairs and maintains heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems as part of the university's routine and preventive maintenance programs. Filter replacements are conducted in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), WorkSafe BC and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers standards. In buildings that do not have an HVAC system, HEPA air purifiers are installed.

STEP 3: COMMUNICATE MEASURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES

1. Education and training

Managing communicable disease is an important part of RRU's OHS. Communicable disease prevention training is a requirement for all employees and students working or studying on campus.

- New and returning employees receive orientation to communicable disease prevention as a part of [New Employee Orientation](#).
- Additionally, employees are required to complete department/job specific OHS and wellness orientation to hazards and programs specific to their work.
- Students, employees, contractors and visitors can find RRU-specific information about COVID-19 at [Prevent the Spread](#).

2. Communication

This communicable disease plan will be available on the university website.

- Prevention measures will be reinforced through campus signage, social media and other communication tools on a regular basis.
- Students receive information about communicable diseases through [RRU LaunchPad](#), RRU's online orientation program for new RRU students.
- The plan will be reviewed annually.

Responding to a communicable disease outbreak

The following practice should be followed whenever a communicable disease emergency such as a regional communicable disease outbreak, pandemic, or public health emergency is declared by local, provincial or national officials. For all other routine, seasonal or individual health issues, individuals should consult their healthcare provider. Routine, seasonal and individual health issues resulting in an absence from work or class should be reported as per university policies and guidelines.

Students

A student who is diagnosed with or believes they have a communicable disease should:

- Stay at home or within their student accommodations unit when sick and avoid close

contact with others to the extent possible:

- Do not return to class or work until advised to do so per public health guidelines.
- Notify instructor(s), supervisor and family as necessary.
- Seek medical attention from their primary care provider.
- To limit the spread of a communicable disease, avoid travelling when sick unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a healthcare professional
- Use antibiotics and antivirals appropriately and exactly as prescribed for the full duration of the prescription.
- Do not self-medicate or share medications with others.
- Maintain awareness of the situation and the progression and nature of the communicable disease by monitoring reliable media outlets.
- Contact [Accessibility Services](#) to inquire about formalizing extensions or a medical leave of absence if the illness is prolonged.

Supervisors

Supervisors who become aware of a student or employee under their supervision who exhibits communicable disease symptoms or is diagnosed with a communicable disease must not release the student's/employee's name, identifying information or condition to anyone other than the appropriate **RRU Designate** (See Appendix B).

Plan: It is important to have a plan in place within each business unit or department to respond to staffing and other business issues that may arise during a communicable disease emergency or whenever employees are unable to attend work due to illness.

A unit's plan should:

- Identify appropriate RRU designate contact(s)
- Identify employees who will work during a communicable disease emergency either onsite or at an alternate location (including home)
- Outline a plan for cross-training team members to provide levels of backup for critical positions
- Develop alternative work arrangements with staff who may have to work from home or a different location
- Create a working group to discuss department-specific issues that may arise during an emergency and preparations to respond to them (e.g., impact of a communicable disease at a conference or other planned event, the potential need for ad-hoc alternate work arrangements, particularly for those whose symptoms have subsided and may want to begin working again but cannot return to campus as yet.)

Employees and Contractors

Faculty, staff and contractors who are diagnosed with or believe they have a communicable disease should:

- Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible
 - Do not return to campus until advised to do so per public health guidelines
 - Notify their supervisor (or academic contact)
 - For employees, record time away from work as sick leave
 - For faculty and academic contractors: Work with the academic contact to arrange alternate teaching schedules or substitute teaching to avoid cancellation of class when possible.
- Seek medical attention if necessary
- Inform their supervisor and RRU designate of their condition or diagnosis and relay any pertinent information provided by their healthcare provider
- Support other employees, contractors and students who have symptoms of a communicable disease (e.g., fever or chills, coughing, diarrhea), so they can avoid being at the workplace when sick
- Limit the spread of communicable disease by avoiding travelling when sick, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a healthcare professional
- Use antibiotics and antivirals appropriately and exactly as prescribed for the full duration of the prescription
- Do not self-medicate or share medicines with others
- Maintain awareness of the situation and the progression and nature of the communicable disease emergency by monitoring reliable media outlets

Returning to campus

Prior to returning to campus, students, employees, contractors and visitors should take precautions to prevent spreading a communicable disease by ensuring that symptoms have passed. This includes staying at home or within their student accommodation unit if contagious and, if necessary, consulting a healthcare professional for guidance or clearance prior to returning to the campus.

During a campus-wide communicable disease outbreak, employees should contact their Human Resources consultant to obtain appropriate direction before returning to campus.

Student Services, acting as a singular point of contact and messaging, would send a consistent broadcast message to all on-campus students (cc: to all academic staff).

Contractors should work with their contract administrator or manager (academic and admin).

Confidentiality

All student, employee and contractor medical information is treated as private and confidential and will be handled in compliance with legal requirements and professional ethical standards.

The confidentiality of any report (confirmed or presumptive) will be maintained to avoid any violation of privacy laws. RRU will collect the minimum amount of personal information necessary to meet the requirements of this plan. Royal Roads will not and must not release personal information about the affected individual's identity or health status. Individuals may voluntarily disclose their status (e.g., to colleagues or another student); however, they are expected to inform the university as per the notification process outlined above.

In the case of a confirmed exposure, Royal Roads University will follow directions and guidance by the Medical Health Officer (MHO).

STEP 4: MONITOR YOUR WORKPLACE AND UPDATE PLAN

Preventing communicable disease involves ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission on campus. Monitoring of the ongoing prevention measures is a shared responsibility of leaders for the areas and individuals they supervise, and JOHSC, as part of regular building inspections.

Individuals should report any health and safety concerns to their supervisor, who is responsible to follow-up and address any concerns as per RRU's [hazard reporting process](#).

Under the guidance of RRU Operations & Resilience and Human Resources, the ongoing review and evaluation of the Communicable Disease Plan will involve the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, as part of its annual consultation process on health and safety programs.

Plans, practices and procedures will be adjusted in accordance with the recommendations of the various authorities: Public Health Office (PHO), MHO and WorkSafe BC.

Any changes to plans, practices and procedures will be communicated from the EOC through the communications and marketing teams, to include updated signage requirements.

Safety concerns and questions with regards to communicable disease can be raised through various channels including:

- Supervisors
- [Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Union representatives](#)
- [Care team \(for students\)](#)
- [Faculty Affairs \(academic contractors\)](#)
- [RRU Safety Officer](#)
- [Operations and Resilience team](#)

SUPPORT SERVICES & RESOURCES

Communicable diseases may generate anxiety, depression, or other mental health challenges to members of our university community. The following internal and external resources are

available to support the mental health and wellbeing of RRU students, employees and contractors:

- Students
 - [Counselling services](#)
 - [CARE team](#)
 - [Prevent the spread](#)
- Indigenous Student Services
 - [Indigenous student services](#)
 - [Hope for Wellness Helpline](#)
 - [HealthLink BC](#)
 - [Indian-Residential-School-Survivors-Society-Crisis-Support](#)
 - 24/7: 1-800-721-0066
 - First Nations Health Authority, telehealth for mental health: 1-855-550-5454
- Employees
 - RRU's [Employee and Family Assistance](#)
- Associate Faculty – for support in all situations and circumstances:
 - Faculty Affairs: facultyaffairs@royalroads.ca
 - [Resources for well-being](#)

Communicable diseases may also trigger prejudicial behaviours and actions such as discrimination, bullying and harassment. Students, employees and contractors who experience grief, trauma and/or stress resulting from such behaviours can obtain support from the following offices:

- Students
 - [Student conduct and complaint process](#)
 - [Contact Student Services](#): phone 250.391.2600 ext. 4580 or toll free 1.800.788.8028
- Employees
 - Email [HR team](#)
 - [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#)
 - [Respect in the Workplace](#)
 - Associate Director, Human Rights and Equity Diversity and Inclusion: Alejandro.Camposgarcia@royalroads.ca
- Contractors
 - [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#)
 - [Respect in the Workplace](#)
 - Human Resources Office: [HR Service Team](#)

Communicable diseases action plans may generate involuntary inequitable impacts for the members of our diverse university community. Students, employees and contractors who experience those impacts can communicate with the following offices:

- Students
 - studentservices@royalroads.ca (Review [Student conduct and complaint process](#))
- Employees
 - Human Resources Office: [HR Service Team](#)
 - Associate Director. Human Rights and Equity Diversity and Inclusion: Alejandro.Camposgarcia@royalroads.ca

- Contractors
 - Human Resources Office: [HR Service Team](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

For additional information about specific communicable diseases, including symptoms, prevention, treatment and communicable disease outbreak, visit the following:

- [BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual](#)
- [Island Health: Communicable Disease Prevention and Control](#)
- [WorkSafe BC Communicable Disease Prevention: A Guide for Employees](#)
- Personal healthcare provider(s) or physician(s)

For additional resources focused on the incorporation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in decision-making related to communicable disease, visit the following:

- UBC Intentional Equity Diversity and Inclusion Decision-Making <https://equity3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/06/Intentional-EDI-Decision-Making-UBCEIO.pdf>
- Diversipro, Inc., (2019). Diversity, Equity and Indigenous Lens. Thunder Bay, ON: Confederation College. Accessed at: <https://www.confederationcollege.ca/human-resources-services/human-rights-decolonization/diversity-equity-and-indigenous-lens>.
- Partington, J. (2020 Apr 27). A Mindset, Not a Program: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Time of COVID-19. *Academica Forum*. Accessed at: <https://forum.academica.ca/forum/a-mindset-not-a-program>.
- Williams, D. (2020). *The COVID-19 Crisis Action Strategy Guide: Recommendations to Drive Inclusive Excellence*. Atlanta, GA: Centre for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation. Accessed at: <https://inclusiveexcellenceacademy.org/deiandcovid19/>.

APPENDIX A: Potential Communicable Disease Descriptions

| Name | Vaccine / preventable? | Description and symptoms |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Coronavirus/ COVID-19 | Yes | Symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties Transmission: Person-to-person via airborne particles or droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects |
| Influenza | Yes | Symptoms: fever; cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle/body aches; headaches; fatigue; sometimes vomiting and diarrhea Transmission: person-to-person via droplets |
| Measles (Rubella) | Yes | Symptoms: high fever; cough; runny nose; red/watery eyes; tiny white spots (Koplik spots) in mouth; rash Transmission: coughing and sneezing; virus can live up to two hours in contaminated air or on a surface |
| Meningococcal Meningitis | Yes | BACTERIAL Symptoms: fever; headache; stiff neck; nausea; vomiting; sensitivity to light; confusion Transmission: germs spread person-to-person (depends on type of bacteria) VIRAL Symptoms: fever; headache; stiff neck; sensitivity to bright light; sleepiness or trouble waking up from sleep; nausea; irritability; vomiting; lack of appetite; lethargy Transmission: caused by other viruses like mumps, measles, influenza, etc. |
| Mumps | Yes | Symptoms: fever; headache; muscle aches; tiredness; loss of appetite; swollen/tender salivary glands approximately 16-18 days after infection Transmission: coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; |
| Norovirus | No | Symptoms: diarrhea; vomiting; nausea; stomach pain Transmission: contaminated food or drink; touching contaminated surfaces and then putting fingers in mouth; having direct contact with someone who is |
| Varicella (Chicken Pox) | Yes | Symptoms: fever; tiredness; loss of appetite; headache; itchy, fluid-filled blisters Transmission: touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from the blisters |

Appendix B: Definitions

Communicable diseases: Communicable diseases are illnesses that spread from one person to another, from an animal to a person, or from a surface or food to a person.

Health Emergency: An urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that seriously endangers the lives, health and/or safety of the population.

RRU Designate: The RRU designate refers to the individual(s) assigned as a student's, employee's or contractor's primary institutional contact, activated as needed during a time of heightened risk or emergency.)

Designates ensure compliance with confidentiality and privacy obligations.

Designates are assigned as follows:

Group

Students

Employees

Associate faculty and academic
contractors

Non-academic contractors

Designate

CARE Team 250.391.8514

Human Resources consultant for
business unit

Academic contact

Relevant manager

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