



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

Royal Roads University

Communicable Disease Plan

Based on WorkSafe BC Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employees June 2021

December 13, 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Communicable Disease Plan is designed to promote the health and safety of the Royal Roads University (RRU) community: students, faculty, staff, contractors and visitors by providing information that can be used to manage exposure to communicable diseases by mitigating risk of transmission and possibility of infection on the university campus. 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, 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 & Resilience (ops-resilience@royalroads.ca).

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE RISK

In the event of an 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, faculty, staff, 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 but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus
- Hepatitis A
- Norovirus
- Measles
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis

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 is the first step 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 and other flu-like symptoms: 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 REDUCE THE RISK TO

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 will aim to reduce the risk through these ongoing measures:

1. **Hand washing:** Actively promote [hand washing](#) and frequent use of hand sanitizer.
2. **Etiquette:** Educate and inform RRU community on how to use [proper cough 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 – [RRU Healthy U](#).
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 | Royal Roads University](#)
 - Associate Faculty- [Faculty-Affairs](#) or [Supports for well-being](#)
 - 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 will host special COVID-19 vaccination clinics on campus for the general public, staff, and students.

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. In addition, filter replacements are conducted in accordance with OHS, WorkSafe BC and ASHRE standards. In buildings that do not have an HVAC system, HEPA air purifiers have been installed.

STEP 3: COMMUNICATE MEASURES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES

1. Education and training

Managing communicable disease is an important part of Royal Roads University's [occupational health and safety program](#). Communicable disease prevention training is a requirement for all employees, students and contractors working or studying on campus.

- New and returning employees receive orientation to communicable disease prevention as a part of their [New Employee Orientation](#).
- Additionally, employees are required to complete department/job specific Occupational, Health Safety and Wellness (OHS& W) orientation to hazards and programs specific to their work.
- Associate Faculty should review the communicable disease [education and training resources](#) on the Associate Faculty Resources site.

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.
- Communication to students is embedded in the [RRU LaunchPad](#), the online orientation for all new RRU students. Health and wellness reminders are sent out on a quarterly cycle to all students through the student success team.
- 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:

- Seek medical attention from their primary care provider
- Stay at home or within 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 by a healthcare professional
 - Notify instructor(s), supervisor, and family as necessary
- To limit the spread of a communicable disease, avoid traveling 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 students/employee's name, identifying information, or condition to anyone other than the appropriate RRU designate. [See confidentiality.](#)

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 plan should address:

- Identification of appropriate RRU designate contact(s)
- Designation of employees who will work during a communicable disease emergency either onsite or at an alternate location (including home)
- Cross training of staff to provide levels of backup for critical positions
- Development of alternate work arrangements with those staff who may have to work from home or a different location
- Creation of a working group to discuss other potential 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, or contractors (includes academic contractors and other embedded contractors) who are diagnosed with or believe they have a communicable disease should:

- seek medical attention if necessary
- inform their supervisor and RRU designate (Human Resources or academic contact in the case of academic contractors/contract managers) of their condition or diagnosis and relay any pertinent information provided by their healthcare provider
- support other staff 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
- stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible
 - Do not return to campus until advised to do so by a healthcare professional
 - Notify their supervisor (or academic contact)
 - For employees, record time away from work as sick leave
- limit the spread of communicable disease by avoiding traveling 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

Faculty and Academic Contractors: Work with the program head to arrange alternate teaching schedules or substitute teaching to avoid cancellation of class when possible.

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).

Associate faculty should work with their contract administrator (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. Royal Roads 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. The relevant Royal Roads designate will ensure compliance with confidentiality and privacy obligations.

RRU Designates are:

Group

Royal Roads Employees
Associate Faculty and Academic
Contractors
Students
For Non-Academic Contractors

Designate

Human Resources Consultant for Business Unit
Academic Program Head with support from Faculty
Affairs
CARE Team member (250-391-8514)
Relevant Royal Roads Manager

In the case of a confirmed exposure, Royal Roads University will follow directions and guidance by the 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 the joint occupational health and safety committee 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: PHO, MHO, WorkSafe BC.

Any changes to plans, practices and procedures will be communicated from the EOC through the communications team 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 & 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, faculty, and staff:

- Students:
 - [Counselling services](#)
 - [CARE team](#)
 - [Prevent the spread](#)
- Indigenous Student Services:
 - [Indigenous student services | Royal Roads University](#)
 - [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
- Faculty and Staff:
 - RRU's Employee and Family Assistance Program
<https://humanresources.royalroads.ca/walmsley>
- Associate Faculty – for support in all situations and circumstances:
 - [Faculty-Affairs](#); or
 - [Support for well-being](#)

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

- Associate Director Human Rights and Equity Diversity and Inclusion:
 - Alejandro.Camposgarcia@royalroads.ca
- Student Services:
 - [Student conduct & complaint process | Royal Roads University](#)
 - [Contact Student Services](#)
 - phone 250.391.2600 ext. 4580 or toll free 1.800.788.8028.
- Human Resources Office:
 - [HR Service Team](#)
 - [Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#)
 - [Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination](#)

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

- Associate Director Human Rights and Equity Diversity and Inclusion:
 - Alejandro.Camposgarcia@royalroads.ca;
- Student Services:
 - studentservices@royalroads.ca; or
 - [Student conduct & complaint process | Royal Roads University](#)
- Human Resources Office: [HR Service Team](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

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

- [BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual](#)
- [Island Health: Communicable Disease Prevention & 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, please 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 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; touching contaminated objects
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 infected
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

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