

COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following document has been prepared for all Metro Vancouver staff based on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) we are receiving in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand there may be unique situations that cannot be captured by the FAQ's. The purpose of this document is to serve as a reference point to help guide you.

We understand that not all scenarios will be captured in this FAQs, and you will still be able to direct inquiries to the COVID-19 Inquiries inbox for guidance (Covid-19Inquiries@metrovancover.org).

COVID-19 FAQ TOPICS:

This FAQ has been organized into the following topics. Clicking on a topic will navigate you directly to that section of the FAQ, where you will find a number of questions and corresponding answers on that topic.

- A. [EMPLOYEE SCENARIOS – ILLNESS](#)
- B. [EMPLOYEE SCENARIOS – SELF ISOLATION](#)
- C. [EMPLOYEE SCENARIOS – TRAVEL](#)
- D. [SAFETY CONCERNS](#)
- E. [ABSENCES FROM WORK / TIME CODING](#)
- F. [WORKING FROM HOME / REMOTE WORK CONCERNS](#)

A. EMPLOYEE SCENARIOS - ILLNESS

1. *Q: What are the COVID-19 symptoms that a person experiences?*

A: The BC Centre for Disease Control states that COVID-19 symptoms are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold. They include cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Employees should conduct a daily personal health check using the [MV protocol](#) or using the online [self-assessment tool](#) through the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

2. *Q: What should an employee do if the employee isn't feeling well?*

A: Call-in sick. In addition, if the employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat, and/or difficulty breathing) the employee is required to self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms. As set out by the BC Centre for Disease Control, if after the 10 days, the employee's temperature is normal and the employee feels better, the employee can return to the employee's routine activities. Coughing may persist for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean that the employee needs to continue to self-isolate for more than 10 days. The employee should contact their supervisor prior to the 10th day to provide an update, and follow any specific instructions given to the employee by medical practitioners.

While in self-isolation, the employee is expected to communicate with their supervisor and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. If the employee is tested for COVID-19, they must report to the supervisor immediately that they have been tested and remain home until they receive the results. If the employee tests positive, the employee should contact a member of the disability management/HR team, and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. If the employee tests negative, the employee is to return to work provided their symptoms have subsided and they are no longer ill.

If the employee is unwell but does not have COVID-19 symptoms, the employee should call in sick and monitor their health daily for changes in their symptoms.

- * **Please note:** For those employees with symptoms of COVID-19, the BC Centre for Disease Control has recently changed its public health advice in regards to self-isolation time from 14 days to 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

3. *Q: An employee in my workgroup has tested positive for COVID-19. What will be communicated to the rest of the staff?*

A: If an employee has disclosed to the supervisor that they have tested positive for COVID-19, the supervisor should immediately report the information to a member of the disability management/HR team and to the [COVID-19 Inquiries](#) inbox as soon as possible. Make sure you flag the email as **important**.

Medical information is confidential and should be limited to only what is operationally necessary. If you feel there is risk of exposure based on close contact (the topic of "close contact" is addressed below) to any other staff, please alert your supervisor right away. If your supervisor is unavailable, follow the appropriate chain of command to ensure the information is appropriately escalated. In no instance should the name of the employee or their diagnosis be communicated to staff without consulting HR Management.

B. EMPLOYEE SCENARIOS - SELF-ISOLATION

4. Q: What if an employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat, and/or difficulty breathing) while at work?

A: The employee is to go home immediately if already at work. The employee should leave the worksite in a manner that minimizes contact with others. When home, the employee should notify the supervisor by phone, call 811, and follow the instruction of medical practitioners.

In addition, the employee is required to self-isolate for 10-days from the onset of symptoms. After the 10 days, if the employee's temperature is normal and the employee feels better, the employee can return to the employee's routine activities. Coughing may persist for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean that the employee needs to continue to self-isolate for more than 10 days. The employee should contact their supervisor prior to the 10th day to provide an update, and follow any specific instructions given to the employee by medical practitioners.

While in self-isolation, the employee is expected to communicate with their supervisor and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. If the employee is tested for COVID-19, they must report to the supervisor immediately that they have been tested and remain home until they receive the results. If the employee tests positive, the employee should contact a member of the disability management/HR team, and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. If the employee tests negative, the employee is to return to work provided their symptoms have subsided and they are no longer ill.

5. Q: I feel an employee in my workgroup is showing signs of COVID-19 illness (cough, sneezing, and/or difficulty breathing). What are my next steps?

A: If you are a peer, please respect the privacy of your co-worker and do not approach your co-worker directly; rather, please inform your supervisor about your concerns.

CLOSE CONTACT WITH CONFIRMED CASE or WITH SOMEONE AWAITING TEST RESULTS FOR COVID – 19

6. Q: Why am I hearing about the term “close contact” in relation to COVID-19?

A: As set out by the BC Centre for Disease Control (“COVID-19: How it Spreads”), COVID-19 is transmitted via larger liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. The virus can enter through these droplets through the eyes, nose, or throat if you are in direct contact with the droplets.

COVID-19 is transmitted by droplets and is not thought to be transmitted by airborne transmission. That means, 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 coronavirus can be transmitted in this way.

As such, the most effective way to protect against the spreading of COVID-19 throughout our workplace and our community is to have a person with COVID-19 symptoms self-isolate. Out of an abundance of caution, Metro Vancouver is requiring employees to self-isolate if they have had “close contact” with a COVID-19 case (person with suspected but unconfirmed COVID-19), *regardless* of whether or not the employee themselves currently has COVID-19 symptoms.

7. Q: What definition is Metro Vancouver currently using for “close contact”?

A: Metro Vancouver has defined “close contact” as the following:

Being within 2 metres for a minimum of 30 minutes

The 2 metre approach is consistent with the current public health agencies’ understanding of the risk factors for transmission. As set out by the BC Centre for Disease Control, droplets typically spread only one to two metres from a sneeze or cough. However, Metro Vancouver’s definition is subject to change as we learn how best to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

Metro Vancouver is continually examining this “close contact” definition and will change it as necessary.

8. Q: An employee does not have any COVID-19 symptoms however believes they were in close contact with a member of the public that displayed signs of COVID-19 illness (cough, sneezing, and/or difficulty breathing). What should the employee do?

A: If an employee with no COVID-19 symptoms has had close contact (defined as within 2 metres for 30 minutes or more) with another person who has a suspected but unconfirmed case of COVID-19, the employee should go home and self-isolate. Then call 811 and follow the instructions of medical practitioners. The employee may work from home if operationally feasible.

9. Q: An employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat, and/or difficulty breathing), has been tested for COVID-19, and is waiting for test results. What should the employee do?

A: If the employee is being tested for COVID-19 they should continue to self-isolate while they await test results. If the employee tests positive, the employee should contact a member of the disability management/HR team, and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. If the employee tests negative, the employee is to return to work provided their symptoms have subsided and they are no longer ill.

10. Q: An employee is not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, however, a member of the employee’s household is being tested for COVID-19. What should the employee do?

A: In this situation, we assume the employee has had close contact (within 2 metres for 30 minutes or more) with potential exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, the employee is to stay at home, advise their supervisor, call 811, consult their doctor and follow the instructions of medical practitioners. The employee should

communicate with their supervisor and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. Where the supervisor determines it is operationally feasible to work from home, the employee may work from home while in self-isolation. If the employee becomes ill while in self-isolation, the employee should notify the supervisor and the employee is then placed on sick leave while the self-isolation period continues.

If the COVID-19 test results come back positive, the employee should contact a member of the disability management/HR team regarding the test results, and based on medical advice determine appropriate next steps.

If the COVID-19 test results come back negative, the employee may return to work so long as they are healthy to do so.

11. Q: A member of the employee's household has been required to self-isolate, and they do not have symptoms of COVID-19, does the employee also have to self-isolate?

A: In this situation, we assume the employee has had close contact (within 2 metres for 30 minutes or more) with potential exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, the employee is to stay at home, advise their supervisor, call 811, consult their doctor and follow the instructions of medical practitioners. The employee should communicate with their supervisor and based on medical advice, determine appropriate next steps. Where the supervisor determines it is operationally feasible to work from home, the employee may work from home while in self-isolation.

C. EMPLOYEE SCENARIOS - TRAVEL

(Re-entering Canada for any reason [conference, vacation, supplies, other])

RETURNED TO CANADA PRIOR TO MARCH 12, 2020

12. Q: If a staff member has recently returned from travel outside of Canada on or prior to March 11, 2020, do they need to self-isolate for 14 days?

A: No, the Provincial Health Officer provided direction on March 12, 2020 requiring those returning from travel outside of Canada to self-isolate. If you returned from travel outside of Canada prior to this date, you are not required to self-isolate.

RETURNED TO CANADA BETWEEN MARCH 12 AND MARCH 17, 2020

13. Q: If an employee does not have symptoms of COVID-19 however has returned from travel outside of Canada on or after March 12, 2020, do they need to self-isolate for 14 days?

A: Per the direction of the Provincial Health Officer, the employee is required to stay at home and self-isolate and monitor themselves for symptoms; the current period of self-isolation is 14 days. The employee is to communicate with their supervisor and discuss options for working from home. Should the employee develop symptoms, they should call 811, follow the instructions of medical practitioners and communicate with their supervisor.

14. Q: If I've only just quickly crossed the border (e.g. Blaine, Washington) to get gas, etc. do I need to self-isolate (after March 12)?

A: Yes. Per the direction of the Provincial Health Officer, anyone who travels outside of Canada is required to self-isolate and stay away from work; the current period of self-isolation is 14 days. Employee is to stay at home, advise their supervisor and self-monitor. The employee is to communicate with their supervisor and discuss options for working from home. Should the employee develop symptoms, they should call 811, consult their doctor and follow the instructions of medical practitioners and communicate with their supervisor.

15. Q: I have guests (friends, family) arriving to stay in my home on or after March 12, 2020 from outside of Canada. Do I need to self-isolate?

A: Consider strongly having your guests stay at a different location other than your home. If this is not possible, then yes, you would be required to self-isolate. If the guests or family are staying in your household, it is assumed that you will have close contact (within 2 metres for 30 minutes or more) with potential exposure to COVID-19 and therefore you are also required to self-isolate for 14 days. If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19, you should have a conversation with your supervisor regarding working from home if operationally feasible.

We expect that these situations will lessen considerably with new travel restrictions. We are asking employees to use their best judgement in having new out-of-country visitors during this time.

Where possible, it is recommended to practice physical distancing and follow recommended hygiene protocols per the [BCCDC website](#). If guests experience symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat, difficulty breathing), encourage them to seek medical advice and check the BCCDC website or call 811 for more information. Employee is to communicate with their supervisor and determine appropriate next steps.

D. SAFETY CONCERNS

16. Q: Do I have to come to work if I have an underlying health issue (or someone in my household does) and I feel that I (we) are at increased risk if I contract COVID-19?

A: Please speak to your supervisor about the operational feasibility of performing your work remotely. You can also request time off using your vacation, CTO, deferred compensation (GVRDEU), special leave (Teamsters), ETH (Exempt), or you can request an unpaid leave.

17. Q: I am feeling unsafe due to concerns around COVID-19 and don't want to be at work. What do I do?

A: Metro Vancouver understands this is a difficult time, and we are thankful for staff commitment to provide critical services that the region needs during this crisis. Please speak to your supervisor, Corporate Safety, or your JHSC representative regarding specific controls to minimize your COVID-19 risk while at work. You can also talk to your supervisor about the operational feasibility of performing your work remotely.

Metro Vancouver has produced several COVID-19 protocols to provide staff guidance on prevention measures in the workplace – they can be found along with the most current MV updates on the [COVID-19 Information page](#) on the MV intranet home page. More COVID-19 protocols are being developed to deal with ongoing COVID-19 issues.

If you still feel the work you are asked to perform is unsafe, the following link provides an overview of the process set out by [WSBC for refusal of unsafe work](#) or call 1.888.621.7233

18. Q: Whom should I consult to review safe work procedures for my work group in the context of COVID-19?

A: Please contact your safety resource in Corporate Safety or email the corporate safety team at corporatesafety@metrovancouver.org. Please copy the Safety officer in the EOC at EOC.Safety@metrovancouver.org.

19. Q: Who can I talk to if I have questions regarding measures that Metro Vancouver is taking to ensure the safety of employees performing critical work in the field?

A: Please contact your supervisor, your JHSC representative, your safety resource in Corporate Safety, or email the Corporate Safety team at corporatesafety@metrovancover.org. Please copy the Safety officer in the EOC at EOC.Safety@metrovancover.org.

E. ABSENCES FROM WORK / TIME CODING

20. Based on overall guidance from the Federal and Provincial Governments, the Provincial Health Officer, and Regional Health Authorities, Metro Vancouver has developed the following table to guide supervisors and employees on the following work related scenarios. This table is included in the COVID-19 Responsibilities and Absences from Work (Temporary Policy):

Scenario	Outcome
1. Employee illness (any illness including COVID -19).	Employee will have access to any applicable sick leave provision/banks.
NON TRAVEL RELATED	
2. Employee medically required to self-isolate with no symptoms of COVID-19 illness.	Employee may work remotely if operationally feasible. If working remotely is not possible, Metro Vancouver will provide paid time up to a maximum of 14 calendar days for the self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer.
3. Employee medically required to self-isolate <u>and</u> develops symptoms of COVID-19 illness during the isolation period.	Employee may work remotely if operationally feasible. If working remotely is not possible, Metro Vancouver will provide paid time up to a maximum of 14 calendar days for the required self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer. At the point in time when the employee develops symptoms of illness, employees will access any applicable sick leave provisions/banks as required.

Scenario	Outcome
TRAVEL RELATED	
4. Employee travels outside of Canada prior to March 12, 2020, and has no symptoms of COVID-19 illness.	Return to regular work schedule and should continue to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.
5. Employee travels outside of Canada between March 12, 2020 and March 17, 2020. Employee has no symptoms of COVID-19 illness.	Employee is required to self-isolate upon return. Employee may work remotely if operationally feasible. If working remotely is not possible, Metro Vancouver will provide paid time up to a maximum of 14 calendar days for the required self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer.
6. Employee travels outside of Canada between March 12, 2020 and March 17, 2020 <u>and</u> develops symptoms of COVID-19 illness during the period of self-isolation.	Employee is required to self-isolate upon return. Employee may work remotely if operationally feasible. If working remotely is not possible, Metro Vancouver will provide paid time up to a maximum of 14 calendar days for the required self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer. At the point where employee develop symptoms of illness, employee will have access to any applicable sick leave provisions/banks as required.
7. Employee travels outside of Canada, on or after March 18, 2020 against recommendations of the Federal Government of Canada and the Province <u>and</u> has no symptoms of COVID-19 illness during the period of self-isolation.	Employee is required to self-isolate upon return. Metro Vancouver will not provide paid time for the required period of self-isolation. Employee may work remotely, if operationally feasible. If working remotely is not possible, the employee can use vacation bank, overtime bank, other banked time off (not including sick leave) or unpaid leave for the self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer.

Scenario	Outcome
8. Employee travels outside of Canada, on or after March 18, 2020 against recommendations of the Federal Government of Canada and the Province <u>and</u> develops symptoms of COVID-19 illness during the period of self-isolation.	Employee is required to self-isolate upon return. Metro Vancouver will not provide paid time for the self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer. Employee may work remotely, if operationally feasible. At the point where employee develop symptoms of illness, employee will have access to any applicable sick leave provisions/banks as required.
AUXILIARIES	
9. Auxiliary employee travels outside of Canada between March 12, 2020 and March 17, 2020 <u>and</u> develops no symptoms of COVID-19 illness during the period of self-isolation.	Auxiliary employees required to self-isolate from work. Employee may work remotely if operationally feasible. If working remotely is not possible, employees will be paid for any previously scheduled shifts during the self-isolation period to a maximum of 14 calendar days for the required self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer.
10. Auxiliary employee travels outside of Canada on or after March 18, 2020. Employee <u>and</u> develops symptoms of COVID-19 illness during the period of self-isolation.	Auxiliary employees required to self-isolate from work. Employee may work remotely if operationally feasible until the point in time in which symptoms develop. If working remotely is not possible, employees will not be paid for any previously scheduled shifts during the self-isolation period recommended by the Provincial Health Officer. Auxiliary employees are not entitled to sick leave benefits.

New scenarios may arise at which time Metro Vancouver will respond accordingly. While due diligence will be taken to keep the FAQ's up to date, policies are updated from time to time and it is the responsibility of staff to reference the policy itself available on the intranet [here](#) for guidance.

21. Q: What changes do I need to be aware of regarding time coding?

A: Effective March 23rd, by 10 am each day until further notice, employees and supervisors must enter the appropriate time reporting codes in PeopleSoft timesheets, including an entry of REG when employees are at work on their normal scheduled day. It is the supervisor's responsibility to make sure that all normal scheduled time (regular related time) for their direct reports is recorded daily. Please note that the time entered does not need to be approved daily and in some cases may have to be adjusted prior to final bi-weekly approval.

In the event that a Supervisor is not available, the next level up Supervisor or Office Manager should be informed and will be responsible to ensure time has been accounted for.

New codes have been developed to address the COVID-19 situation and are to be reported daily, as follows:

Code	Scenario
SCK	Employee illness (not COVID-19)
SZK	Employee illness (COVID-19 related)
QUA	Isolated at home for 14 days and not able to work as not operationally feasible
WQUA	Isolated at home for 14 days but working from home
WFH	Working from home
REG	Employee working their normal shift (in the office or at a facility)
EOPS	Employee working in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
VAC, DCH, CTH (any other leave bank)	Employees on approved scheduled days off

If an employee is not scheduled for work on a particular day, (i.e. in the case of AUX, Shift Workers, Modified Worker, Part-time, Temporary Full-Time or Weekends), please do not code on that day.

Bi-weekly recording and approval of timesheets will still be required to adjust the daily entries for changes and adjustments that occur, such as overtime worked in the day.

If you are not sure how to enter time, please review instructions on People Soft found under PeopleSoft HR/Payroll Reviewing Personal / Benefits / Payroll Information.

[Entering Your Own Time](#) OR [Enter Time On Behalf of Someone Else or My Employee](#).

F. WORKING FROM HOME / REMOTE WORK CONCERNS

22. Q: A staff member has been approved to work from home however they do not have their laptop at home. Also, who can we contact if they are having technical issues relating to working from home?

A: If your employee has equipment (laptop) at their worksite and is not showing symptoms and not in self-isolation, they may come into the office / place of work to collect their laptop. If they are self-isolating and able to work, their laptop can be couriered to them. The supervisor should first ensure the laptop is set up for working from home (VPN) and may consult the Helpdesk with the asset number of the piece of equipment at 604-432-6252 to confirm.

If your employee is having technical difficulties while working from home, they may contact the Helpdesk at 604-432-6252.

Employees and managers need to consider whether materials are necessary to have in physical copy offsite in order to work productively at home. Careful consideration must be provided to confidentiality and privacy implications of taking physical files offsite. Per the [COVID-19 Remote Work \(Temporary Policy\)](#), employees are responsible for ensuring that all information related to Metro Vancouver shall be kept in a manner that is safe, secure, and confidential. Per the policy, employees must seek approval from their Supervisor (or designate) prior to removing any physical files from Metro Vancouver worksites.

23. Q: I don't have a laptop but require one to work from home. What should I do?

A: Contact your direct Supervisor or Manager. As laptops become available, IT will advise EOC Logistics who will determine the allocation between departments. Departments will advise IT of employees in need of laptops and IT will then handle the assessment, preparation and deployment activities directly with staff involved.

24. Q: What operational considerations does a Supervisor have to think about for their employees to work from home?

A: The primary considerations around feasibility to work from home are operational considerations and whether the nature of the work can reasonably be completed from a home location. These are determined at the departmental level. It may be important to plan at the divisional or departmental level in order to consider individual requests. Consult your manager and they will provide you with direction with respect to what may or may not require you to report to your regular work location.

Metro Vancouver has two safety protocols to address employees working remotely from home. [The Covid-19 Protocol – Remote Work Safety](#) provides guidance to MV staff in order to ensure ongoing compliance with WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations and adherence to the elements of Metro Vancouver’s Safety Management System. The [Covid-19 Protocol – Remote Work Hazards](#) is designed to help Metro Vancouver staff identify hazards associated with working remotely and to provide guidance on safety elements in their remote workspace.

25. Q: How do I access my voicemail remotely?

A: There are two options: Call your work phone number, press the star key and you will be provided with a series of prompts.

Another option includes:

1. Dial 604-436-6885.
2. Enter ** and your local extension.
3. Enter your regular passcode.
4. Press P to play your messages.

26. Q: How do I change my Voicemail greeting remotely?

A: To change voicemail remotely:

1. Dial 604-436-6885
2. Enter ** and your local extension.
3. Enter your passcode
4. Press U for User Options
5. Press G to change greeting
6. Press L to listen to your greeting or R to record a new greeting.
7. Press # to accept new greeting.

27. Q: How do I forward my work phone to my cellphone?

A: Call forwarding procedure:

To call forward your phone, before you leave the office, from your Mitel phone:

1. Dial #99 followed by 10-digit cell/landline phone number that you would like to forward to.
2. Hang up.
3. Make a test call.

To cancel call forwarding, when you are back in the office, from your Mitel phone:

1. Dial ##9.
2. Hang up.
3. Make a test call.

28. Q: I normally take public transit to work but transit is not a viable option right now because of the current COVID-19 situation and the need for physical distancing. Now that the parkades at Head Office are not fully utilized, is temporary access to the MTIII parkade and/or free parking available?

A: The direction at this time is to maintain the status quo in terms of access to the parkade being limited to those paying for spots. Current users are still paying for the spots in MTIII, including tenants, and we don't know when they will require them. Pay parking and monthly random parking is available in the mall area of P2 near Sportschek.

29. Q: Since many employees are working from home will our parking pay deduction be suspended during this period that we are not actively using the parking spot?

A: At this time, parking fees will not be suspended for those working from home. You are able to cancel your parking by emailing Diana.Baillie@metrovanancouver.org. Typically, one month's notice is required. To reinstate your parking, you are required to complete the [Application for Employee Parking](#) and you will be assigned a parking spot once one becomes available.

30. Q: How do I forward my work phone to my cellphone?

A: Call forwarding procedure:

To call forward your phone, before you leave the office, from your Mitel phone:

1. Dial #99 followed by 10-digit cell/landline phone number that you would like to forward to.
2. Hang up.
3. Make a test call.

To cancel call forwarding, when you are back in the office, from your Mitel phone:

1. Dial ##9.
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