

**FORWARDED ON BEHALF
OF
INSPECTOR ANDREW CHAN**

**To: All VPD Employees - Civilian and Sworn
COVID-19 Update: March 18, 2020**

The following will provide an update on key developments for March 18, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The VPD's Pandemic Working Group can be reached by email at vpdpandemicworkinggroup@vpd.ca.

For additional information and resource links, please refer to VPD COVID-19 intranet site.

<http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/COVID19/default.aspx>

Key Updates for March 18, 2020

A provincial State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency have been declared. The Pandemic Working Group continues to liaise closely with its provincial partners to interpret these declarations. **It is important to remember, at this time, that VPD member's enforcement authorities have not changed.**

Federal Update – Border Closures

- Canada and the United States reached an agreement to close the border to non-essential traffic. **Start date to be announced soon and measures will remain in place until further notice.**
 - Recreational travelers (tourists and shoppers) will be barred from entering either country.
 - The supply chain will remain unaffected, including freight trucks.
 - People who work in essential services, and are crossing to work, can continue to do so.

Provincial Update – State of Emergency Declared

- There have been 45 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the British Columbia total to 231.
- As of March 18, 2020, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General declared a State of Emergency in British Columbia.
 - This declaration grants additional to the Provincial Government such as controlling human resources and supply chains if required (i.e., enacting food rationing protocols, setting fuel prices, etc).
 - The State of Emergency Declaration supports the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declaration issued on March 17, 2020.
 - **At this time, that VPD member's enforcement authorities have not changed.**

Municipal Update – City Seeking State of Emergency

- The City of Vancouver is seeking to declare a State of Emergency on March 19, 2020.

Public Health Officer – Statement to First Responders

On March 18, 2020, the Provincial Health Officer issued a statement to all first responders in BC (attached for reference):

- You do not need to self-isolate if you assist a citizen who is experiencing symptoms, unless you are directed to by public health, or unless you begin to exhibit symptoms. Your department members do not have to self-isolate or cease operation if you think you or another member have been exposed.
- As COVID-19 begins to spread in our communities, members may be advised to monitor yourself daily for symptoms. The most important thing you can do to protect others is **stay home if you become sick**.

Operational Considerations

- The Pandemic Work Group continues to assess Departmental needs in response to the COVID-19 situation. At this time, no operational reassignments of staff are being undertaken.
- **IMPORTANT:** Please notify Car 10 through your chain of command for any COVID-19 related operational incident. Car 10 will notify the Pandemic Working Group if required.
- In order to keep each other safe, you are asked to clean the interior of your police vehicle at the start and end of your shift. Cleaning supplies continue to be available at the kiosk.
- **REMINDER:** All VPD staff are reminded to submit WSBC forms for confirmed or potential COVID-19 exposures.

Parade briefings (and E-briefings)

REMINDER of the upcoming parade briefings:

Date: Thursday – March 19, 2020
Location: Room 200 **Graveley**
Time: 1000, 1400, 1930

All other sworn and civilian staff may attend any of the briefings; however, **attendance will be limited to 50 people per briefing**. In an effort to minimize group gatherings, e-briefings will be made available for staff that do not wish to attend the parade briefings in person. The e-briefings can be found on the COVID-19 intranet page:

<http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/COVID19/default.aspx>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Frontline Staff

Personal protective equipment continues to be available to staff 24/7 at the Spyglass Kiosk. This includes half-masks, gloves, eyeglasses and alcohol wipes. Additionally, these items will be available during business hours at the Health & Safety Office at Graveley HQ. Members are also reminded to carry their

personal issued respirators to be used as deemed necessary. If PPE needs to be replenished, please notify the Pandemic Working Group.

While the VPD ensures that half-masks are available for staff, it is important to note the following information from the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC):

- Masks should be used by sick people to prevent transmission to other people. A mask will help keep a person's droplets in.
- It may be less effective to wear a mask in the community when a person is not sick themselves. Masks may give a person a false sense of security and are likely to increase the number of times a person will touch their own face (e.g., to adjust the mask).
- Health-care workers will wear surgical masks, eye protection and gowns in order to protect themselves and other patients. During health-care procedures in which aerosol sprays may be generated (for example, when giving certain inhaled medications), health-care workers should wear specialized masks.

Health and Wellness: HR Supports

- REMINDER: The Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM)/Peer Support is available 24/7 should anyone be feeling anxiety or stress related to COVID-19.
 - Sworn members can reach out to Ali Gailus (778-847-5452), Michele McKnight (778-227-0789), Dave Moe (604-404-9303) or any other team member. Their names/contact information can be accessed on the intranet:

<http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/PeerSupport/Lists/Contacts/AllItems.aspx>

- Civilian members can reach out to Amanda Vetter (604-349-5713) or any other Civilian CISM team member. Their names/contact information can also be accessed on the intranet:

<http://references.sharepoint01.vpd.bc.ca/CISMCivilian/Lists/CivilianCISMTeam/AllItems.aspx>



March 18, 2020

To: First Responders

I'm writing to provide clear advice to your departments and members regarding self-isolation precautions related to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In the course of your daily duties, you may come across citizens who are experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms. It is important to continue using appropriate personal protective equipment in line with established best practices. Citizens with cold or flu-like symptoms are being advised to contact their health care provider or 8-1-1 to determine if their additional risk factors constitute testing for COVID-19. If these citizens become patients in the health system, they will be assessed for testing for COVID-19.

Should these citizen test positive for COVID-19, public health will follow up with contacts of those citizen – this includes household contacts, first responders, and others that may have been in close proximity while they were experiencing symptoms. Public health will advise that these contacts, including first responders, self-isolate for a period of 14 days.

This process means that **you do not need to self-isolate if you assist a citizen who is experiencing symptoms, unless you are directed to by public health, or unless you begin to exhibit symptoms. Your department members do not have to self-isolate or cease operations** if you think you or another member have been exposed. As COVID-19 begins to spread in our communities, members may be advised to monitor yourself daily for symptoms. The most important thing you can do to protect others is stay home if you become sick.

Testing is available for all who need it, but not everyone requires a test. If you develop symptoms, use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool (<https://covid19.thrive.health/>).

Your departments have received advice on how to increase common sense practices to prevention infection and transmission in your workplace. This includes increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces with products already used for this purpose, ensuring soap is stocked, and putting measures in place that supports social distancing.

I will issue advice to you as the situation evolves. Please visit www.bccdc.ca/covid19 regularly for information and updates. Thank you for continuing to keep British Columbians safe.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer