

Subject: COVID-19 Update - March 14, 2020

**FORWARDED ON BEHALF
OF
INSPECTOR ANDREW CHAN**

**To: All VPD Employees - Civilian and Sworn
COVID-19 Update: March 14, 2020**

Current Situation

A Pandemic Working Group has been established to coordinate the VPD's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This response is being led by HR and the Emergency Planning Unit. In conjunction with health authorities and agency partners, the VPD continues to monitor and prepare for the situation as it evolves. This includes ensuring that the necessary actions are being taken to safeguard VPD staff and operations accordingly.

At this time, Vancouver Coastal Health is still advising that the risk of coronavirus disease transmission continues to remain **low** for residents of British Columbia and that people without symptoms do not pose a risk. There have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the VPD.

On March 14, 2020, the Province provided the following update on the COVID-19 outbreak in BC:

- There have been 9 new cases over the past 24 hours, bringing the total for BC to 73.
- 7 of the 9 cases are in the Vancouver Coastal region - 3 cases are in hospital and 6 people have recovered.
- 16 cases are associated with a single long-term residence in North Vancouver.

Key Updates for March 14, 2020

- Federal Travel Advisory – Canadians abroad are being advised to return home while commercial flight travel remains available. This will impact VPD staff who are currently travelling outside Canada.
- All VPD work related travel outside BC, for all VPD staff, remains cancelled until further notice.
- The VPD continues to adhere to the Province's March 12th directive regarding self-isolation for travelers returning to Canada. Of note:
 - Unless other extenuating circumstances apply (e.g. there is medical direction for self-isolation, or an individual is symptomatic), staff who returned home prior to March 12th, 2020 @ 1600hrs, are not required to self-isolate.
 - Anyone returning home after March 12th, 2020 @ 1600hrs, must self-isolate for 14 days (regardless of length of stay). Questions on travel around the March 12th directive can be directed to HR.

- All VPD staff are reminded to submit WSBC forms for confirmed or potential COVID-19 exposures.
- All VPD staff are reminded to call the sick-line if you are unable to attend work due to illness or self-isolation:
 - 604 - 717 - 9600 (Sworn)
 - 604 - 717 - 9700 (Civilian)

Work Related Travel

All work related travel outside BC, for all VPD staff, remains cancelled until further notice. Staff who are affected by work related travel restrictions are asked to please contact VPD Finance-Travel so they can coordinate any ticket refunds/credits and any other related costs (vpdfinancetravel@vpd.ca). Any exceptions to the current work related travel restrictions will require concurrence at the Deputy Chief level and final approval by the Chief Constable.

Currently, work related travel within BC is still permitted for all VPD staff. In light of the current concerns over COVID-19, VPD employees have the ability to opt out of work related travel and should consult with their supervisor if they have any concerns.

Personal Travel

On March 12, 2020, BC Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and BC Health Minister Adrian Dix announced that **the Province is recommending all residents avoid all non-essential international travel, including to the United States.**

Effective March 12, 2020, **the Province has advised that anyone who travels outside of Canada will need to stay away from school or work for 14 days upon return.** This directive from the Province will impact staff who reside in the USA, or are currently travelling outside Canada.

On March 14, 2020, **the Federal Government issued a global travel advisory warning Canadians abroad to return home while commercial flight travel remains available.** This warning will impact VPD staff who are currently travelling outside Canada.

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>

The VPD is adhering to Provincial directives on travel and self-isolation. In response to the travel restrictions, the following applies:

VPD Employees entitled to sick leave benefits.

	Scenario	Compensation	Payroll coding
1.	Any illness (including COVID-19).	Sick Leave (paid or unpaid depending on balance).	Sick – Bank with Pay or Sick – Bank without pay (Consult HR)
2.	Medically directed to self-isolate – no symptoms of illness.	Regular Pay (new pay code) for duration of self-isolation (14 days).	Scheduled – TBD Coding (for self isolation)

3.	Medically directed to self-isolate – no symptoms initially but develop during period of self-isolation.	Regular Pay (new pay code) until such point employee becomes ill, after which code as Sick Leave.	Scheduled – TBD Coding (for self isolation) Sick – Bank with Pay or Sick – Bank without pay (Consult HR)
4.	Out of country, on vacation before March 12 th @ 1600hrs and return to country and must isolate for 14 days (No symptoms of illness).	Regular Pay (new pay code) for duration of self-isolation (14 days)	Scheduled – TBD Coding (for self isolation)
5.	Out of country on vacation before March 12 th @ 1600hrs and return to country and isolate. Then develop symptoms during period of isolation.	Regular Pay (new pay code) until such point employee becomes ill, after which code as Sick Leave.	Scheduled – TBD Coding (for self isolation) Sick – Bank with Pay or Sick – Bank without pay (Consult HR)
6.	Travel out of country post March 12 th @ 1600hrs. Self-isolate for 14 days upon return.	Vacation/leave banks (all banks depleted except sick leave).	Vacation – any leave bank (current year, deferred, EDO, OTL, etc.) Sick banks cannot be used
7.	Travel out of country post March 12 th @ 1600hrs. Self-isolate for 14 days upon return. Then develop symptoms during period of isolation.	Vacation/leave banks (all banks depleted except sick leave until such point employee becomes ill, after which code as Sick Leave).	Vacation – any leave bank (current year, deferred, EDO, OTL, etc. with no symptoms) Sick – Bank with Pay or Sick – Bank without pay (Consult HR)

For Auxiliary and TFT staff without sick leave benefits, please contact Payroll directly – Auxiliary and TFT staff will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. For all staff, if you have insufficient time in your banks, consult HR directly.

Impacted staff should contact Human Resources with any questions relating to travel restrictions and self-isolation directives.

The decision for personal travel is up to the individual staff member. However, as the situation around the world is changing rapidly, staff should ensure that they have the latest information before making that decision.

Staff also need to consider:

- If they travel into an area where a travel advisory is in place, they will **NOT** be covered by Green Shield Canada's (GSC) emergency travel for virus-related emergencies.
- Other emergency travel claims (not related to the virus) would still be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Travel coverage that may otherwise expire while an employee is stranded in an area under quarantine will be extended until the end of the period of quarantine.
- GSC has more information [on their website](#).
- Members are encouraged to check with their medical insurance provider before travelling.

Health Canada has a number of active travel health notices for COVID-19 posted on their website and each country or area may have different levels of risk.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

Operational Considerations

Efforts are underway to better prepare and inform the VPD's frontline members with regards to the VPD's COVID-19 preparedness. The VPD's Pandemic Working Group is providing Patrol briefings on Saturday, March 14th (even side) and Wednesday, March 18th (odd side). The following are important operational considerations at this time:

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, 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.

Jail Procedure

The risk to Jail staff members and members attending the jail is low. However, early identification of detainees who require screening by the medical staff is paramount. The medical staff at the VPD jail will be conducting enhanced screening of all detainees in light of the COVID-19 virus.

Any detainees transported to VPD jail who are showing symptoms of COVID-19, or have had contact with an infected person, must remain in a police wagon at the sally port until the Jail NCO has been notified. This will allow the jail to prepare and limit exposure to staff and other detainees.

Additionally, please notify Fleet Services/ Kiosk to ensure the vehicle or transport wagon is disinfected appropriately.

Calls for Service at Hospitals

Like medical staff and hospital workers, it is essential that VPD personnel attending hospitals or other locations where COVID-19 may be present (or dealing with potentially infected persons) be mindful of infection control and take appropriate universal precautions: such as social distancing where possible, washing hands, and the use of PPE where appropriate.

As long as VPD personnel are mindful of these issues and taking these precautions, merely being in the same location as a person with flu symptoms would NOT render them "exposed" to COVID-19.

E-Comm

Steps have been taken at E-Comm to help mitigate first responder's exposure to anyone that may be ill with COVID-19. A Temporary Operating Procedure for all police agencies has been implemented. Call Takers will:

- Ask if anyone appears sick or has had a known exposure to the COVID-19 virus (e.g. including having traveled to an area that has experienced a COVID-19 outbreak).
- If there are symptoms:
 - Ask the caller to describe the symptoms (i.e. cough, fever, shortness of breath).
- Document the answers in the CAD event.

Dispatchers will subsequently advise attending members if any symptoms or known exposures are documented in the CAD call.

How to Reduce the Risk of Exposure

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) recommends that **to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19**, the same measures that are taken in relation to colds and flu should be employed:

- Wash your hands frequently (it is the single most effective way of reducing infection spread).
- Practice other good hygiene habits: do not touch your face/eyes/mouth with your hands, and cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough (ideally with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched workspace surfaces.
- Maintain good general health (eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, exercise in moderation).
- **Stay home if you are sick.**

Contact 8-1-1 (HealthLink BC - Nurse's Line) or your health care provider for questions about your personal health situation, available 24/7.

Communication

The VPD Pandemic Working Group will continue to provide regular updates to the Department as the situation develops.

Managers and supervisors – please ensure timely email communications are disseminated to staff who may not have immediate access to work email.

A dedicated email address has been established to contact the VPD's Pandemic Working Group for questions or queries relating to COVID-19. Emails can be sent to: vpdpandemicworkinggroup@vpd.ca. At this time, the email will be monitored during business hours (7-days a week).

Furthermore, the COVID-19 VPD Intranet page will be updated as the situation evolves and can be accessed here:

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



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