



Shuswap Immigrant Services Society

COVID-19 Safety Plan: Office¹

Last Updated June 25, 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this Safety Plan is to support the health and safety of staff and clients as we look at slowly transitioning back to working in the office. This document is required by and follows the outline provided by WorkSafe BC, and will be updated as needed as we move forward.

I. Assess the Risks

Involve workers in assessing workplace risks

- Staff and contractors who work in the office have had an opportunity to review and provide input into this plan.

Identify areas where people gather

- front desk/reception area
- computer/resource room
- kitchen
- offices

Identify job tasks where workers are close to one another or to clients

- letting clients in and out the front door
- providing client services at front desk
- providing client services in computer/resource room
- workers conferring

Identify tools, machinery, and equipment workers share

- photocopier
- main filing cabinet / keys
- kettle / microwave
- front desk

¹ Note that a separate Safety Plan is being developed for the English (ESL/EAL) classroom.

- client log book and intake form folders
- office supplies such as stapler, shredder, paper cutter, and hole punch

Identify surfaces people touch often

- light switches
- doorknobs
- desktops and tabletops
- computer keyboards and mice
- telephone
- taps (kitchen & bathroom sinks)
- toilet flush handle

II. Implement Protocols to Reduce the Risks

Reviewed the following industry-specific protocols from WorkSafe BC

- settlement and integration sector (draft document as of June 11, 2020)
- in-person counselling
- office space

Reviewed guidance and orders from public health, professional associations, etc.

- WorkSafe BC
- Dr. Bonnie Henry, PHO
- BC Restart Plan
- AMSSA, IRCC
- SA Chamber, local and regional colleagues

First level protection (elimination):

Limit the number of people in your workplace where possible by implementing work-from-home arrangements, establishing occupancy limits, rescheduling work tasks, or other means.

Rearrange workspaces to ensure that workers are at least 2 m (6 ft) from co-workers, clients, and members of the public.

- Upon re-opening, there will be a maximum of three workers in the office at any given time, occupying distinct workspaces. Usually there will only be one or two. The remainder of the staff will continue working remotely.
- The office will be open part-time for the foreseeable future, with a combination of remote/online and in-person services scheduled.
- On days the office is open (Tuesdays and Thursdays to start), doors will be locked and clients will access in-person services by appointment only.
- The number of clients in the office at any time will be restricted to FOUR. Client access to non-essential areas (offices, Board room, and kitchen) will be restricted. Staff will retrieve any client documents from the printer.
- Clients will be encouraged to attend appointments alone (e.g., no children, friends, or other accompaniment). However, this will not be strictly enforced, and consideration

will be given to those who require accompaniment (e.g., due to language, comprehension, level of ability, lack of child care). Clients will be asked explicitly when booking appointments whether they will be accompanied and by how many people (maximum three) in order to maintain the limit on the number of clients allowed in the office at one time.

- The computer/resource room will be rearranged so that the two computers are at least 2 m from one another.

Second level protection (engineering controls):

If you can't always maintain physical distancing, install barriers such as plexiglass to separate people.

- Plexiglass barriers will be installed on the front desk in the office prior to re-opening, as well as on the desk/work table in the large office. We will assess whether we require plexiglass in additional locations as we move forward.
- We will add markings on the floor to direct client flow through the office and maximize physical separation.
- We will remove non-essential items (magazines, children's toys) from the reception area and computer/resource room.
- The worker at the front desk will be seated as far as possible from the hallway where clients pass into and out of the computer/resource room.

Third level protection (administrative controls):

Establish rules and guidelines, such as cleaning protocols.

- Workers will be asked not to share tools (pens, staplers, computers) wherever possible, and to disinfect frequently touched surfaces/items (identified in Section I, above) throughout the day, and before and after each client visit.
- Shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected after each use
- Staff will wash or sanitize their hands upon arrival at work, between client appointments, and after coming into contact with any public item.
- In-person appointments will be scheduled and staggered to allow time to sanitize surfaces between appointments (e.g., intervals or virtual sessions scheduled between in-person appointments) and to minimize contact between clients.
- A professional cleaner will be retained to thoroughly clean and disinfect the kitchen, washroom, computer/resource room and office space and empty garbage and recycling bins at the end of each day the office is open to the public.
- No hugging or handshaking will be allowed between staff or between staff and clients.
- During the process of booking appointments, staff will explain illness and safety protocols to clients (this can be done verbally over the phone but must be followed up by an email to ensure clients receive the information in writing):
 - If a client (or anyone with whom they have been in contact) feels unwell or has a fever, the client may not enter the SISS office. The client may choose to cancel or reschedule the appointment, or may be served via phone/email/video chat. The client must be reminded of this when they arrive for their appointment.

- The maximum of four clients allowed in the office at one time is meant to allow a **maximum of two client groups** in the office at once: up to two individual clients OR two groups of two clients OR one individual client and a group of three clients, OR a single group of four clients.
- Clients must confirm at the time of booking the appointment whether they will be coming alone (preferred), or whether they REQUIRE accompaniment:
 - A client may bring up to three children if they have no access to child care, OR
 - A client may bring ONE friend, companion, interpreter, or assistant. A client who brings a friend, companion, interpreter, or assistant, may bring a maximum of TWO children.
- Clients should bring any items required to keep children occupied during their appointment. Clients may not access the toys kept in the office.
- If clients arrive early for their appointment time, they must wait outside until it is time for their appointment.
- Clients will be encouraged to bring their own masks and gloves (for themselves and anyone accompanying them, including children). If they do not bring their own, we will supply disposable masks and gloves, which they will be required to wear.
- Clients must sanitize hands upon entering the office.
- Clients will be advised in advance not to bring food or gifts for the staff (e.g., donuts, chocolates, tea and coffee, and the like).
- Clients may not “hang out” in the office outside of a regularly scheduled appointment. Once the reason for their visit has been addressed, they will be asked to leave so the office can be prepared for the next client.
- Other than times where clients need to be close to staff (e.g., reviewing hardcopy or online documents together), they will be expected to observe safe physical distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) between themselves and other people in the office. When closer proximity is required, it should be done separated by one of the plexiglass screens installed for this purpose.
- Clients will be advised of service delivery changes via group email and posts to our Facebook page and website, and signage at the office location.
- COVID-19 signage for both workers and clients will be posted throughout the office. Signage will demonstrate the correct use of masks and remind staff and clients to wash or sanitize their hands frequently, not to touch their face, to be mindful of what they touch, not to enter the office if they have COVID-like symptoms, to maintain safe distancing, and not to cluster in hallways and doorways. Signage will be posted in Arabic, English, French, and Tagalog (we will consider additional languages, as needed).
- The following occupancy limits will be clearly posted for the benefit of staff and clients:
 - No more than five people may be in the lobby/reception area at one time (a maximum of two individual clients or client groups—one of which is arriving and one of which is departing, or one of which is receiving services while the other is waiting for services (although the waiting clients should remain outside for reasons of client confidentiality as well as social distancing)—always separated

from one another by at least 2 m (6 feet), and a maximum of one worker supporting one of these clients / client groups at the front desk.

- No more than five people may be in the computer/resource room at one time (a maximum of two individual clients or client groups, one at each computer, separated by at least 2 m (6 feet), and a maximum of one worker supporting one or the other of these clients / client groups.
- No more than two people (staff only) may be in any of the three offices at one time. Staff will retrieve any printed documents from this room for clients. (Note that this policy will be revisited for the larger office once we have been open for 4-6 weeks under the current safety plan.)
- The Boardroom will remain closed for the time being.
- No more than one person (staff only) may be in the kitchen at one time.
- No communal food will be provided or consumed.
- No more than one person may be in the washroom at one time (exception: a client who requires an attendant or who is accompanied by a young child).
- Staff (settlement worker) in-office shifts will be staggered so that only one settlement worker is in the office each week. This will leave time between in-office shifts to monitor for the emergence of COVID-like symptoms. This will assist in reducing workplace transmission in the event that a staff member becomes ill.
- Due to the potential risk related to occasional visits from people hostile to our mission and mandate, we will attempt to maintain a complement of two staff members in the office on days we are taking in-person appointments. Where two staff cannot be in the office at once, we will maintain a schedule of check-ins (at least one check-in every two hours) between the staff person in the office and the ED or another designated individual.
- Staff should avoid eating together at this time, and should not share food. Thoroughly wash any dishes used with soap and very hot water.
- Record all clients, staff, visitors, and contractors and the times they were in the office in case of the need for future contact tracing.

Fourth level protection (PPE):

If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risk, consider the use of [non-medical masks](#). Be aware of the limitation of non-medical masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. Ensure workers are [using masks appropriately](#).

- Staff will wear masks and gloves when working directly with clients, except where these hamper activities such as typing.
- Clients and anyone accompanying them, including children, will be required to wear masks and gloves. If they do not bring their own, we will supply disposable masks and gloves.
- We will post signage about the correct use of masks and reminding people to cover their mouth and nose with the crease of their elbow or with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing.

- We will provide hand sanitizer to workers/clients as they enter the building (front and back doors), at service delivery desks, and in the computer/resource room.
- We will ensure that used tissues, disinfectant wipes, and safety equipment are properly disposed of in a lined waste receptacle that is emptied daily by the cleaner.