



Office of the
Provincial Health Officer



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

4 KEY WAYS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES CAN PREPARE FOR novel coronavirus COVID-2019

Provincial Coronavirus Response
Feb. 28, 2020

Important Notes: this document aims to facilitate preparedness.

Given that it takes time to implement preparedness strategies, local governments and Indigenous Communities are encouraged to plan for the scenario of significant community spread of COVID-19.

1. Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Review and update existing contingency and business continuity plans that are applicable to critical infrastructure, such as sanitation, water, fire, police and power, so that they can be sustained over a number of weeks with higher rates of absenteeism due to illness or caregiving.
- Identify essential functions and the people who perform them. Conduct a training needs analysis where necessary to build in the cross-training redundancy to ensure work can continue for all essential services.
- Work with health authorities, Health Emergency Management BC, and other service providers to understand the nature of biological events and to coordinate planning, including the use of community buildings if required, to support people who are sick but do not need hospitalization.
- Review procedures with first responders to ensure there is a process in place for worker safety and training protocols that will be used during a biological event.

2. Community Involvement

- Encourage community groups, including service clubs, schools, businesses, and non-profits to partner with you to support people in your community who are sick or grieving.
- Network with health authorities, and community and volunteer organizations to build participation for events outside the norm that may require supplemental shelter, food or other necessities.
- Work with the local business association to assess potential impacts to business and include local business in communication and planning so that community services, such as grocery delivery, are maintained.
- Be aware of the strengths and vulnerabilities of your community. For example, small, rural and/or remote communities may benefit from strong and cooperative social and familial networks but may have very limited access to services and a consistent supply of goods.

3. Employee Health

- Maintain a healthy work environment by ensuring fresh air circulation and posting tips on how to stop the spread of illness at work.
- Encourage employees to stay home when ill, and update sick leave, and caregiver, family and medical leave policies. Concern about lost wages may prevent people from self-isolating.
- Promote hand washing and coughing and sneezing etiquette among employees. Ensure wide and easy availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer products.
- Establish or expand policies and tools where possible that enable employees to work from home with appropriate security and network access.

4. Financial Planning

- Assess the potential financial impact of a biological event on the local government or Indigenous community, and plan for the possibility of short-term decrease in revenue.

For more information and tools, visit <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus>

