



BC CANCER RESEARCH REOPENING Q&A

Thank you for your collaboration and patience as we plan the reopening of our research activities across BC Cancer. We are taking a gradual and careful approach to protect our staff, patients and communities.

Timelines

What is the timeline of Phase 1 implementation and when is Phase 2 anticipated?

The aspirational timeline for Phase 1 is June 1, 2020. Phase 2 will depend on successful implementation of Phase 1, PHSA/BC Cancer return to work planning, and public health guidelines.

When will training / risk assessment / app be available? Phase 1 estimated start date?

Yes, a mandatory training module will be provided on the PHSA [LearningHub](#). The risk assessment will be part of each principal investigator and department planning process. The aspirational start date for Phase 1 is currently June 1, 2020.

Is there a timeline for when non-clinical researchers who work in the research centre will receive an update about returning to work?

Our current plans are to implement Phase 1 of return to work on June 1, 2020.

In a phased restart, have we considered moving to shifts (2-3 a day)?

Yes, this was considered within reason (for example, no more than 2 x 6 hour shifts). After-hours access should be discouraged for staff safety, and more importantly to allow cleaning staff to do their work during the evening.

Will there be exemptions to the phased return for specialized research programs where reducing staff densities/numbers is not possible?

This will be determined by the reopening plans proposed by principal investigators and departments.

Will all research activities resume, assuming compliance with distancing restrictions, or are there activities that will be restricted?

This will be determined by the reopening plans proposed by principal investigators and departments.

What proportion of the 30 per cent capacity is already been taken up by essential (already-approved) staff? Who chooses what lab-based people get priority to return first?

Each PI will determine the priorities for their own labs, regardless of prior approval. Each department will review the PI's plans.

Can we make sure all the information needed for individuals to return to work be available on both the BCCRC network and the PHSA network?

All information will be made accessible to all employees regardless of their network access.

Mask usage/PPE

If physical distancing cannot be maintained, with the given shortages in N95s, will surgical masks suffice? Do we re-use surgical masks? Do you suggest face shields?

N95 masks are not recommended for this purpose, and are reserved for aerosol generating procedures, as well as for specific circumstances dictated by laboratory safety procedures. Regular surgical masks are sufficient when social distancing is not possible. The use of face shields should not be necessary in most circumstances. Please see [BCCDC's Personal Protective Equipment page](#) for more information.

Please provide guidance on how often to change the surgical masks we have to wear at CRC.

Masks that are used for research procedures, when required, should be discarded after use as per usual procedures. Masks provided at the entrance for circulating through common areas can be reused until the end of the work shift, and should be discarded when soiled or damaged.

Can we wear non-surgical masks on site or do we need to wear the surgical masks provided by work?

Surgical masks will be provided at the entrances to the BC Cancer Research Institute and the Echelon facility, and should be worn according to the posted instructions and instructions as outlined in the training module on the [LearningHub](#).

Why are masks required in the lunchroom? How do you eat with a mask on? Would it not just be better for people to space out, eat and go?

Obviously masks need to be removed to eat. There are restrictions on the number of concurrent staff using the lunch rooms. Further, meeting rooms on specific floors have been designated as lunch rooms with restrictions on the number of people and occupancy time. People are encouraged to eat outside, weather permitting, while following physical distancing guidelines.

Would the surgical masks be distributed to each lab or people need to redeem individually from a staff? How frequently do we change a mask? Will masks be provided for the commute?

Masks will be centrally supplied by research administration. Masks used for research procedures should be discarded after each use as per usual procedures. Masks used solely to circulate through common areas can be reused (unless frayed or soiled) and discarded at the end of each shift. Masks used for commuting are the responsibility of the employee.

If there is only one person allowed per bay, why would you need to wear a mask as physical distancing is already happening?

A mask is required only when social distancing is not possible.

Human resources

Will anything be done to allow for paid sick time for those that don't currently get it (i.e. co-op students)?

At this time, there are no approved institutional plans for additional paid sick time for employees. Please consult your supervisor.

Are we able to conduct Zoom interviews now for people we would like to hire as soon as things open or has a freeze been put on hiring?

Yes, interviews can proceed as there is no freeze on hiring at this time.

Can new staff be onboarded in Phase 1 if a detailed training plan outlining distancing plans is submitted? We have a number of guides written up to facilitate training for us.

Yes, this can be considered as part of department and principal investigators' laboratory reopening plans.

Could work shifts extend to weekends? This may allow some flexibility for colleagues without childcare.

This would need to be described and approved in the departmental plans.

Will there be special accommodations for staff who have elderly or immunologically vulnerable family members at home, who may wish to continue working from home despite reopening?

PHSA is a family-friendly organization, and we intend to accommodate flexible arrangements whenever possible on a case-by-case basis. Please consult your supervisor.

Screening

For employees who are being encouraged to return to the office ASAP, what monitoring is being done for symptoms? i.e. if wake up with a cough should we still come in? Stay at home?

People with symptoms should not come into work. People should complete the [COVID-19 online self-assessment tool](#), which contains detailed instructions.

If there is a health check at the front door and the line-up takes 30 minutes, does this impact my work start time?

There will be no health check at the door, but elevator flow may be slower due to traffic flow pattern adjustments as per the guidelines. Staff are encouraged to use stairs when physically able to. If wait times are experienced for union employees, please consult your union representative on these matters. For non-contract employees, please consult your supervisor directly.

Can we get the list of symptoms for staff/their family which would warrant staff to stay home? Even headache is on the list of symptoms. What about people who have allergies?

The [screening app](#) provides guidance on the steps to follow. In some cases, people with stable chronic symptoms or known conditions may still be allowed to come in to work. Consultation with PHSA or UBC Workplace Health is encouraged when in doubt.

Transportation

When people are allowed to go back to work, how are the people that take transit being considered? Would they need special requirements?

People are encouraged to walk or bike to work when feasible. Parking spots will be made available for department allocation for employees who live far away and are part of the department's reopening plan, on a case-by-case basis. Transit remains a viable option and employees are encouraged to follow public health guidelines about the use of face masks for transit.

If we have no choice but to take public transport to work, will we have to do remote working instead?

Remote working arrangements are encouraged, whenever possible, independently of transportation considerations.

Will parking fees be waived for all during Phase 1 and 2?

Yes, parking fees will be waived during Phase 1. For Phase 2, no decision has been reached yet.

Is there going to be extra secure storage for bikes to encourage people to bike to work instead of taking transit?

Extra storage space has already been implemented in the bike room, with new, modern high density racks. Additional bike storage is available at the [VGH cycling centre](#).

Traffic flow

Will researchers be able to work at multiple sites in the nearby buildings (e.g. CRC and VCHRI) when opening starts?

We recommend minimizing travel between buildings whenever possible. Employees who work at hospital sites will need to abide by all BC Cancer Research requirements, including completing the self-assessment and complying with all BC Cancer Research and PHSA requirements.

Will the building intake flow be setup to handle the traffic or will personnel arrival times need to be staggered?

Please consult the training module on the [LearningHub](#) and your departmental guideline documents for traffic flow patterns in Phase 1.

Clinicians in scrubs have been noted to be going between the hospital and research centre during the lockdown. Are there any guidelines about such movement?

We recommend minimizing travel between buildings whenever possible. Employees who work at hospital sites will need to abide by all BC Cancer Research requirements, including completing the self-assessment and complying with all BC Cancer Research and PHSA requirements. It should be noted that [Vancouver Coastal Health employees are NOT allowed to wear scrubs off-site](#).

Are external contractors allowed into the building during Phase 1/2 for equipment repairs or maintenance?

Yes. External contractors will need to complete the online self-assessment tool, and be accompanied by a BC Cancer Research employee to move into public areas. PPE will need to be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained. External contractors coming from another country must follow federal and provincial guidelines.

Since there are two staircases in the building that run all the way to ground floor (#1 and #2), can one of them be designated for going up and the other one for going down?

Yes – please refer to the traffic flow guideline section in the training module on the [LearningHub](#).

Re: elevators for travel up; stairs for down. Lab elevators are used to access ARC from wet labs so please clarify how best to access ARC - perhaps one "down" elevator in the labs?

Yes – please refer to the traffic flow guideline section in the training module on the [LearningHub](#).

How are BCCRI external entrance/exit doors other than front lobby door being monitoring?

Please consult the guideline documents for traffic flow patterns in Phase 1. Adjustments may be necessary over time. Please refer to the traffic flow guideline section in the training module on the [LearningHub](#).

Public health

If a staff member is COVID-19 positive, who does the cleaning (i.e. the manager or cleaning staff?) How to do this while maintaining confidentiality for the individual?

Public health is responsible for contact tracing and will direct the process. If a staff member is known to have tested positive for COVID-19, the manager or principal investigator should inform the BC Cancer Research safety office who will oversee cleaning of the area. It should be reminded that everyone is expected to clean and sanitize their own workspace after each use, even when in good health.

Protective measures

Will there be any signage put in place regarding physical distancing and hand washing?

Yes.

Is funding still in place should we need procure more supplies (ex. PPE, physical barriers, wipes, etc.) to ensure we are following physical distancing and cleaning processes?

Yes. Safety supplies will be centrally distributed from the safety office.

Are face-to-face meetings in PI offices okay? What number is allowed?

Meetings are not encouraged in office spaces, and virtual meetings should be considered. If physical distancing is not feasible in specific circumstances, masks must be worn.

Someone asked who would do the distancing checks and the reply was admin but admin has also been said to be working from home, how does that work?

The office of research administration and the research safety office will be responsible for physical distancing checks.

What are the repercussions for people not following the rules?

We encourage all employees to be calm and kind towards each other, and not take these matters into their own hands. Non-compliance should be reported to your supervisor.

What are the restrictions for core facility use?

Each core facility will be addressed in the host department's reopening plans.

Will locker rooms be open in Phase 1 for exercise?

The locker rooms located on the B1 level of the BC Cancer Research Institute will be open for changing and washroom use only. The showers are closed to general staff. The only exception for shower use is ARC staff.

How will we address lab coats in the wet lab areas?

Lab coats are recommended as per usual safety procedures, and cannot be worn outside the laboratory area. Proper spacing for lab coat storage is recommended.

Working remotely

Those of us assigned admin duty at home in the longer term. What help do we have to continue to produce similar output using slower and older internet and computer infrastructure?

Please consult your supervisor to discuss particular circumstances.

If someone close to us has symptoms, if the research centre is open and we are supposed to stay home, will we still be allowed to continue to work remotely if we feel well enough?

Yes.

You presented that admin staff will continue working from home. How about computational/bioinformatics people?

Everyone who can work from home should continue to do so until further notice.