

May 7, 2020

Dear Business Owners,

Re: Operating a business in the Vancouver Coastal Health region during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Provincial Health Officer has issued orders requiring modification or closure of businesses serving food or beverages, farmer's markets and personal services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic but has not issued orders requiring closure of other businesses. Vancouver Coastal Health believes that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in these environments can be mitigated and consistent with BC's Restart Plan, that it is possible to safely operate most businesses at this time.

Business owners must comply with applicable Provincial Health Officer orders meaning that currently, they must not operate food or beverage services except for take-out or delivery service, they must not offer personal services and must not host mass gatherings involving more than 50 people (but could have more than 50 people on site if physical distancing remains possible given the size of the facility). Business owners should follow guidance issued by the Provincial Health Officer to the hotel, retail food and grocery, food and beverage, farming, manufacturing, mining and constructions sectors, if applicable. Provincial Health Officer orders and guidance can be found here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Businesses should implement strategies that allow both staff and customers to follow the Provincial Health Officer's physical distancing recommendations and keep themselves 2 metres apart from other people while on site as much as possible. Other strategies, such as plexi-glass barriers between staff and customers that mitigate face-to-face contact, are acceptable alternatives. Customers should not be screened for temperature or symptoms upon entry and should not be required to wear a mask. Signage advising customers who are ill that they should not enter is acceptable. Staff should be sent home if they are sick, and advised to contact their health care provider or 811. Owners should follow routine cleaning practices with enhanced cleaning of high-touch surfaces or shared equipment. Owners should ensure that handwashing, toilet and shower facilities, if available, are open, well stocked and cleaned regularly.

There may be additional measures related to the type of business that owners can implement to further reduce the risk of COVID-19 such as limiting the number of customers, changing hours of operation or making changes to the environment by installing hand sanitizer stations or physical barriers.

For advice regarding specific businesses please contact an Environmental Health Officer at ehvc@vch.ca.

Sincerely,



Mark Lysyshyn MD MPH FRCPC
Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health