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*Small Ship Tour Operators Association*  
*of*  
*British Columbia*  
**COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES**



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# Executive Summary

The Small Ship Tour Operators Association of BC (SSTOABC) is a coalition of 7 companies in British Columbia who all operate overnight nature tours from 5-10 days in duration. These small passenger vessels carry from 6 to a maximum of 24 guests – typical group size is 12 – for wilderness focused voyages. These are outdoor adventures, out on deck watching whales, exploring remote beaches, hiking in the coastal forest or sitting in an estuary watching a bear. Voyages are self-contained and typically avoid communities during the trip.

The purpose of this document is to give a clear outline of the measures the members of the Small Ship Tour Operators Association of B.C. are taking for the health and safety of all operators, crew, and guests for COVID-19. We take the health and safety of everyone on board our vessels seriously and aim to outline safety measures for every aspect of this industry.

The health and safety of our remote communities, Indigenous partners, and elders are of top priority. The SSTOABC, and the member companies, work with and consult with First Nations and respect protocols that are in place. We encourage every member to consult with their First Nation in whose traditional territory they operate.

Every Small Ship operation is different with its own unique set of operating procedures. The SSTOABC encourages anyone who is interested in finding out more to contact us, or the individual member directly.

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# Overview

## Purpose

This document provides practical advice and guidelines to ensure safe operations, as businesses seek to reopen their operations after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## SSTOABC

The Small Ship Tours Operators Association of B.C. (SSTOABC) was formed to promote and protect the vessel based multi-day tour industry along the BC Coast. With their collective voice they have been able to work closely with Provincial and First Nations government to build a sustainable and highly respected industry.

Currently there are 7 member companies representing 11 passenger vessels. Member companies are:

- Bluewater Adventures - Island Roamer, Island Odyssey, Island Solitude
- Maple Leaf Adventures - Maple Leaf, Swell, Cascadia
- Mothership Adventures - Columbia III
- Ocean Adventures - Great Bear II
- Ocean Light II Adventures - Ocean Light II
- Outer Shores Expeditions - Passing Cloud
- Pacific Yellowfin Charters - Pacific Yellowfin

## Types of Operations

While the nature of each operation is different, there are inherent similarities. All SSTOABC member companies operate Transport Canada certified passenger vessels offering remote wilderness multi-day tours along the British Columbia coast. Vessel sizes, itineraries, and tour focuses vary throughout the operators therefore this document aims to outline general practices with the intent that each operator can adapt them to their specific operation.

All SSTOABC members conduct bear viewing at some point during their operational season and they will follow the Commercial Bear Viewers Association COVID-19 Best Practices regarding specific bear viewing activities.

## Orders and Guidance

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If an operator cannot meet all the COVID-19 orders and guidance to operate their tours safely, they should not operate.

- Stay 2 metres (6 feet) from other people you come across
- Wash your hands often, especially around communal areas such as docks, boat ramps, float planes, guest shuttles, etc.
- Follow all travel advisories and self-isolation requirements
- Follow all municipal, First Nation community, provincial and federal closures (e.g. parks, infrastructure, etc.).

Most operators work without a storefront, and have limited interaction with the general public outside of provisioning, float plane pickup-drop-off, guest shuttles, etc.

This Exposure Plan identifies the actions that will be taken to reduce the number of social interactions between crew and guests, as well as nearby communities, physical distancing or enhancing protection through other means where physical distancing is not practical, increased hygiene practices (outlined below), and cleaning and disinfecting high touch point areas. In circumstances where interactions are necessary, such as provisioning, it will be important to maintain physical distancing and practice good hygiene. Designating crew to a same small working group for as long as practical will also reduce social interactions. Like a family unit, this working group will ensure close contact only occurs within a select small crew.

***Additional Resources:***

- Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>
- WorkSafeBC provides an exposure control plan guide at: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/exposure-control-plans/exposure-control-plan-for-infectious-disease-for-occupational-first-aid-attendants?lang=en>

**The SStOABC is dedicated to the health and safety of every guest, employee, and community member in whose territory we operate. Implementing this Best Practices will help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and provide confidence within our operations and rural communities.**

## Public Health Directives

The Provincial Health Officer is the senior public health official for B.C. and is responsible for monitoring the health of the population across the province, providing independent advice to the ministers and public officials on public health issues.

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The responsibilities of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) are outlined in the Public Health Act and include the following:

- provide independent advice to the ministers and public officials on public health issues;
- monitor the health of the population of B.C. and advise on public health issues and on the need for legislation, policies, and practices;
- recommend actions to improve the health and wellness of the population of B.C.;
- deliver reports that are in the public interest on the health of the population and on government's progress in achieving population health targets;
- establish standards of practice for and conduct performance reviews of Medical Health Officers; and
- work with the B.C. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and B.C.'s Medical Health Officers across the province to fulfill their legislated mandates on disease control and health protection.

**Please refer to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) for updates**

## WorkSafeBC Directives

WorkSafeBC is a provincial agency dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across B.C. They partner with workers and employers to prevent work-related injury, disease, and disability. Their services include education, prevention, compensation and support for injured workers, and no-fault insurance to protect employers and workers.

WorkSafeBC helps businesses meet their obligations under the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. All employers in British Columbia have an obligation under the Act to ensure the health and safety of workers and other parties at their workplace. With respect to COVID-19, that responsibility includes protecting workers by following the orders issued by the office of the provincial health officer, guidance provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control and the latest news released from the government. In addition, employers must implement policies and procedures to protect workers from the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Employers should consider how best to communicate about potential exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace to workers. There should be a system whereby workers (including joint health and safety committee representatives and worker representatives) are able to inform management of concerns related to being exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace. Open communication is key to finding out about specific tasks that concern workers as well as gaining input on appropriate control measures to keep workers safe.

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Workers should know and understand their workplace health and safety responsibilities — and those of others. Workers have three key rights:

- the right to know about hazards in the workplace;
- the right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace;
- and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Workers in B.C. have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard. An undue hazard is an “unwarranted, inappropriate, excessive, or disproportionate” risk, above and beyond the potential exposure a general member of the public would face through regular, day-to-day activity. In these circumstances, the worker should follow some specific steps within their workplace to resolve the issue. The worker would begin by reporting the undue hazard to their employer for investigation and the employers would then need to consider the refusal on a case-by-case basis, depending on the situation.

If the matter is not resolved, the worker and the supervisor or employer must contact WorkSafeBC and a prevention officer will then investigate and take steps to find a workable solution for all involved.

If entering the workplace, workers should:

- Comply with the employer’s instructions around minimizing exposure to COVID-19.
- Wash their hands frequently, and/or use hand sanitizer.
- Take steps to minimize exposure to COVID-19 while away from work.

## Recognize Hazards/Assess Risks

Every workplace is unique. Businesses must regularly assess all the hazards within their operations, taking appropriate steps to eliminate or control the associated risk. This process is referred to as a risk assessment. Businesses must also ensure they are taking all the appropriate action to protect themselves and others against the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Within the tourism and hospitality industry, there are many routine situations where crew will have contact with customers, coworkers, and the physical environment itself (surfaces, doors, equipment etc.). These encounters could give rise to contact with COVID-19, if not controlled adequately. All businesses must think about the risks in their workplace and take steps to control them. Such controls will include adhering to current public health orders, if applicable, public health advice, as well as implementing best practices to keep your employees and guests safe. We have outlined some best practices that employers should consider when implementing COVID-19 related controls in the workplace.

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## Exposure Control Plan

According to section 5.1.1. of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, the following biological agents are designated as hazardous substances:

- a liquid or solid material that is contaminated with a prion, virus, bacterium, fungus or other biological agent that has a classification given by the Public Health Agency of Canada as a Risk Group 2, 3 or 4 human pathogen that causes an adverse health effect;
- a biological toxin that causes an adverse health effect

Section 6.34 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation requires employers to develop and implement an exposure control plan if a worker has or may have occupational exposure to a biological agent. The exposure control plan must include the following:

- (a) a list of all work activities for which there is a potential for occupational exposure;
- (b) engineering controls and administrative controls to eliminate or minimize the potential for occupational exposure;
- (c) standard or routine infection control precautions and transmission-based precautions for all work activities that have been identified as having a potential for occupational exposure, including
  - (i) housekeeping practices designed to keep the workplace clean and free from spills, splashes, or other accidental contamination,
  - (ii) work procedures to ensure that contaminated laundry is isolated, bagged and handled as little as possible,
- (d) a description of personal protective equipment designed to eliminate or minimize occupational exposure;
- (e) a program to inform workers about the contents of the exposure control plan and to provide them with adequate education, training, and supervision to work safely with, and in proximity to, a biological agent;
- (f) a record of all training and education provided to workers;
- (g) a record of all workers who have been exposed, while performing work activities, to a biological agent designated as a hazardous substance in section 5.1.1.

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# General Operating Guidelines

## General Practices

Because of the proximity in nature of small ship operations, all operators are asked to adhere to the below guidelines for operating safely within COVID-19.

Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. Ensure good ventilation. Maintain proper function of toilets, drains and pipes. Cover nose and mouth with tissue paper while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly. Keep hands clean and wash hands properly: before touching eyes, nose and mouth, if there is a need to do so; after handling objects soiled by feces, respiratory or other body secretions; after touching public installations or equipment, such as handrails, control panels or doorknobs. People with symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever should wear a mask and consult a doctor promptly. Let the doctors know the travel history. People returning from endemic areas should consult doctors promptly if they have symptoms of respiratory diseases after the trip.

## First Nation Communities

**First Nations have jurisdiction in states of emergency to protect the health and safety of their communities. Some First Nations, under their local states of emergency, have issued travel restrictions related to travel into their communities. Essential travellers are asked to respect checkpoints and comply with restrictions unless providing services at the request of the First Nation community.**

The SSTOABC members sign Protocol Agreements in partnership with the First Nations in whose traditional territory they operate.

Working together for the health and well being of community members and elders is of utmost priority for all SSTOABC members.

SSTOABC members are to follow directives from their First Nation in whose traditional territory they operate in and where applicable, adhere to their guidelines and protocol agreements.

## Employee Policies

### Employees Must

- Practice physical distancing by working more than 2 metres (6 feet) apart from co-workers whenever possible
- Continue to follow all other safe work procedures. If it is unsafe to work, talk to your supervisor or health and safety representative.

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- Stay home if they are sick or might be sick. Use the BC Ministry of Health for self-assessment: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
  - Avoid touching their face
  - Wash their hands at the start of their shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, after touching common items, and at the end of their shift. Remove jewelry while washing.

### Workplace Wellness/Sick Leave Policy

Employers must ensure they have clear policies that address the following:

- Expectations from / for employees when they report to work (e.g. washing hands, wearing PPE, undergoing wellness assessment)
- What employees do when they feel sick (e.g. reporting procedures)
- Sick leave entitlement

### Progressive Discipline Policy

The responsibility for enforcing occupational health & safety regulations eventually lies with the employer. While employees are required to follow these, the employer needs to ensure employees do so. For employees who are observed to not be following these regulations, employers are expected to use discipline, which includes verbal and written warnings, and in extreme cases, termination. Therefore, it is essential that employers have a progressive discipline policy and all employees are familiar with it.

## Communicable Disease Control Plan (CDCP) guide

**Prepare a summary that can be referenced in the event of an outbreak.**

At a minimum, the plan should include the following:

- Vessel Information (number of crew and guests, location)
- Crew contact information (names, telephone numbers and email addresses)
- Crew in each 'working group'
- Which crew interacted with which guest – Crew declaration

### Protocols for Preparing and Responding to COVID-19 Cases

**All operators should have an updated crew and guest illness policy that is communicated to all crew before reporting for work and to all guests before commencing their travel heading for a remote location. If they are sick or showing symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay home and self-isolate.**

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### 1. Assessment

- Crew and guests must review the self-assessment information provided.
- Operators will monitor their crew and guests to assess any early warning signs as to the status of their health. A self-assessment tool is provided <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en> or through the COVID-19 BC Support App self-assessment tool.

### 2. If a crew member or guest is feeling sick with COVID-19 symptoms while on board:

- Crew or guests who feel sick with COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, trouble breathing, dry cough, fatigue, sore throat and aches and pains, are to remain on-site, self-quarantine, and contact Coast Guard or **Health Link BC at 8-1-1** immediately.
  - If they live close enough to reach home safely without stopping, they are to be sent home immediately.
  - If they do not live close enough to reach home safely without stopping, they are to remain on board, self-quarantine and contact Coast Guard, 8-1-1 or a doctor for further guidance.
- **Exceptions:** If the person displaying potential COVID-19 symptoms is in a remote location that does not have a reliable method to communicate verbally with a health care professional, and/or does not have reasonable access to reliable ground transportation (i.e. a road), then that person should be moved to a location that does.

### 3. If a crew member or guest tests positive for COVID-19:

- They will not be permitted to return to a remote location until they have recovered from COVID-19.
- Any crew or guests who have interacted closely with the infected person will self-isolate for 14 days.
- Close off, clean and disinfect their work area immediately and any surfaces that could have potentially been infected/touched.

### 4. Self-Isolation

- Any crew member or guest already on-site with any symptoms of COVID-19 is not permitted to enter any common part of the communal area and must self-isolate.
- Any crew member or guest who has or is suspected of having COVID-19 will self-isolate for 14 days.
- Persons in self-isolation can place dishes outside of their room for pick-up. Disposable gloves can be used by individuals who are picking-up and handling these dishes. Ordinary cleaning and sanitation procedures for dishes are sufficient for killing viruses.

### 5. Ensure Laundry is handled safely

Use precautions when doing laundry. Contaminated laundry should be placed into a laundry bag or basket with a plastic liner and should not be shaken. Gloves and a mask should be worn when in direct contact with contaminated laundry. Clothing and linens belonging to the ill person can be washed together with other laundry, using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C). Laundry should be thoroughly dried. Hand hygiene should be performed after handling contaminated

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laundry and after removing gloves. If the laundry container comes in contact with contaminated laundry, it can be disinfected using a diluted bleach solution.

### *6. Ensure Confidentiality*

It will be important that any targeted communicable disease interventions are non-stigmatizing and respect confidentiality. This includes maintaining privacy for those seeking healthcare or who may be part of self-isolation, contact tracing, or outbreak investigation.

### *7. Doctor's Note*

A significant burden to the local health care system can arise simply from company policies that require sick notes and back to work notes. Employers are asked to excuse employees for sick leave without requiring a doctor's note if their employees are ill or required to self-isolate. This helps not only to reduce pressures on the health care system but also minimizes the risk of spreading infection within the community.

## Customer Policies

### Messaging to Customers (Pre-trip)

- If you have underlying medical conditions, it is recommended that you do not participate in the trip.
- Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19, which primarily displays as a persistent cough, will not be permitted on board. If you are sick, please stay home.
- If you have travelled outside Canada, you are not permitted on board until you have self-isolated for a minimum of 14 days. If you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended that you stay home.
- If you live in a household with someone who has COVID-19 or is showing symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended that you stay home.
- Physical distancing is required at all times (minimum 6ft apart) – if physical distancing is not possible, all guests and crew should wear a face mask
- Washrooms on board are disinfected frequently; hand sanitizers are located throughout the vessel

## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is a strategy to limit the spread of COVID-19 and is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. Physical distancing is a conscious effort to reduce contact between people to slow down the spread of the virus. Even if you are symptom free and not part of an at-risk group, you still need to adhere to physical distancing measures to avoid contracting and spread of the virus.

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The aim is to do everything possible to limit in-person interactions, while finding new and more protective ways to operate within the physical infrastructure of the workplace. Everyone in the workplace must adhere to the following:

- report to work with mindset to abide by physical distancing processes
- wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as identified by a risk assessment process
- continue to follow all existing safe work procedures in the workplace
- wash and sanitize hands regularly, cough/sneeze into upper sleeve or elbow (not your hands)
- avoid physical contact with others
- if you notice that another employee is not abiding by the physical distancing policy, you must report it to a supervisor
- reconfigure the workplace to maintain appropriate distance between workers.

Get your joint health and safety committee (or worker representative) involved in brainstorming physical distancing measures that could work in the spaces they work in. Have your joint committee consider the interactions they have with others, solicit input from the team and encourage all workers to promote the approved physical distancing measures. Spread the message that the most considerate thing your workers can do for their co-workers and customers is to keep two metres between themselves and the people they work with. Encourage workers to use a standard greeting with each other that is positive but reminds others to keep a safe distance.

From a customer perspective, businesses must implement physical distancing to reduce opportunities for interactions among large groups that would have prolonged close contact. Practically this might mean limiting the number of guests on board and adapt services in areas where physical distancing cannot be practiced.

## Physical Distancing and Local Communities

SSTOABC operators may stop at rural and First Nation communities for sharing cultural history with guests and provisioning boats. The SSTOABC recommends that all operators consult with their local First Nation in whose traditional territory they operate to effectively understand their protocols for operating in COVID-19.

- Indigenous populations face heightened health risks due to lower health outcomes compared with non-Indigenous Canadians. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations disproportionately face health disparities linked to the social determinants of health (i.e.

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social, economic, cultural, political inequities). As such, all operators must respect any precautions being taken to avoid COVID-19 transmission into First Nations communities.<sup>1</sup>

- All operators should stay abreast of any current precautions being taken in their region.
- It is **not** recommended that medical care is sought from a local First Nations health center. There may be inadequate resources to sustain an influx of external cases.

If a crew who is symptomatic wishes to return to their First Nation home, the First Nation health centre should be notified to determine that sufficient resources are in place to support the isolation of the individual on arrival.

### Physical Distancing – Tender Excursions (zodiac and skiffs)

If you cannot remain physically distant, all guests and crew on the excursion should wear a mask. If this is not possible. Do not go on the activity.

### Physical Distancing – Bear Viewing

All SSTOABC members will follow the Commercial Bear Viewers Association COVID-19 Best Practices regarding specific bear viewing activities

## Sanitation & Hygiene

### Hand Hygiene

To achieve the best hand washing results, crew should take off their watches, rings and accessories on hands and wash their hands properly according to the following procedures. Wet hands under running water. Apply liquid soap and rub hands together to make a soapy lather. Away from the running water. Rub the palms, back of hands, between fingers, backs of fingers, thumbs, fingertips,

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and wrists for at least 20 seconds (same procedure also applies to disinfection of hands with alcohol hand rub). Rinse hands thoroughly under running water after rubbing. Dry hands thoroughly with clean cotton towel, paper towel or hand dryer. Towels for drying hands should never be shared. If necessary, turn off the tap by wrapping the faucet with paper towel. Avoid touching the faucet again with washed hands.

**Hand hygiene is most important at the following times:**

- Before eating or preparing food;
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing one's nose;
- After going to the bathroom;
- After touching potentially contaminated surfaces such as taps and doorknobs; and
- Before and after contact with an ill person;

Employers should ensure that materials for adhering to hand hygiene are available on board. Provide lidded receptacles for used tissue paper disposal. Provide conveniently located dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub; where sinks are available, ensure that supplies for handwashing (i.e., liquid soap and disposable towels) are consistently available.

### Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against infectious materials. It should serve as a last resort that should not replace any other risk control and infection control measures. However, sufficient stock of PPE should be kept ensuring its provision to protect employees from exposure to infectious agents in the workplace. The common PPE used include:

**Surgical mask** Wear a surgical mask to protect mucous membranes of the nose and mouth during procedures that are likely to cause exposure to blood or body fluids (for example, in case of handling or segregating heavily soiled linen sheets or laundering items of guests.)

**Particulate respirator** Use a particulate respirator (e.g., N95 respirator) for conducting maintenance work such as sanding and high pressure spraying etc.

**When to wear a mask - Wear a mask to protect mucous membranes of the nose and mouth in situations where it is not possible to maintain 2 metres of separation (for example, in case of travelling in a vehicle with a guest or other employees.)**

**Gloves** Wear disposable gloves when touching blood, body fluids, mucous membrane, or contaminated items. Remove gloves promptly after use and perform hand hygiene immediately. Gloves do not replace hand hygiene.

Glove Type	Definition	Advantage	Protection Level	Usage
<b>Nitrile protective gloves</b>	<b>Made of synthetic material offers robust protection.</b>	<b>Stretchy, durable</b>	<b>Chemicals, viruses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Galley</li> <li>• Food service</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Equipment Maintenance</li> </ul>
<b>Leather Gloves, other multiple use gloves</b>			<b>Low level protection appropriate for low traffic high touch areas – where an employee is using a hand tool, or driving a tender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool and equipment (including vehicles, etc.) handling.</li> </ul>

**Gown or apron** Wear gown or apron to protect skin or trunk and to prevent soiling of clothing during procedures that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions. Wear a coverall for conducting high pressure water spraying during maintenance or when substantial whole-body contamination is anticipated. Remove soiled gown as promptly as possible and perform hand hygiene to avoid transfer of microorganisms to other people or environments.

**Goggles / Face shield** Wear goggles / face shield to protect the mucous membrane of the eyes when carrying out procedure that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood or body fluids of the guests (e.g., handling of heavily soiled linen sheets). Wear goggles / face shield when conducting high pressure water spraying for maintenance. Ordinary spectacles do not provide adequate protection. Goggles / face shield should be changed after procedure or whenever contaminated. Reusable goggles / face shield should be washed and decontaminated in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions.

### Environmental Hygiene & Decontamination

Since infective agents can survive in the environment for a period of time, it is vital to observe environmental hygiene from time to time and environmental decontamination should be strengthened, in particular during outbreak situation.

Disinfect the environment with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (5.25%) solution, leave for 15-30 minutes before rinsing with water and mopping dry. Special attention should be paid to the

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disinfection of toilets, galleys and objects which are frequently touched such as light switches, doorknobs, and handrails.

(Specific guidelines for cleaning should be included in the sector specific section)

## Employee & Guest Communications

### Employee Communications

Effective communications to employees are an important element of a good workplace. It assumes even greater significance at times of crisis. The current situation is constantly evolving, and employees are having to deal with multiple personal and professional changes that they may previously have not had to deal with. Ensuring employees are kept informed, and fully understand, expectations around hygiene, company policies, safe work practices and protocols to be followed will not only ensure better compliance but will also go a long way in obtaining employee commitment. Face to face communication can take place if proper physical distancing measures are observed but other options for communications should also be utilized, such as emails, posters, short videos etc.

### Guest Communications

Businesses must develop standard communications that they can share with guests planning to come on board. This communication should include

- A message welcoming them on board
- Specifics about the current operational environment (e.g. provincial health directives that apply)
- Expectations outlined in the customer policies section above (pg 14)
- An overview of all the efforts that you are undertaking to ensure customer health & safety

This communication should be available in English and other languages as appropriate and should be featured on the company website and conveyed on board.

## EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN FOR TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

In situations where crew are required to work together in close proximity to complete tasks, the employer will designate crew into Working Groups. Crew in Working Groups must take care to maintain adequate physical distancing around guests, and ideally not share tools and equipment with guests. If sharing tools or equipment with persons from outside of the Working Group, the equipment must be wiped down and cleaned with a disinfecting agent such as disposable wipes and/or a glove protocol is to be implemented.

Where it is not possible to provide personal tools, the shared tools and equipment must be wiped down and cleaned with a disinfecting agent such as disposable wipes or a diluted bleach solution

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between uses by different crew. Rubber gloves should be worn while handling bleach solutions and the area should be well ventilated.

Crew should receive training on cleaning tools and to ensure compliance and understanding of hand washing and hygiene.

Crew who use specialized PPE and are properly trained in its use (e.g. crew certified and trained to use PPE because of their normal work role) should not share PPE with other crew. Employers must establish a labeling system to help with organization of this specialized equipment.

Crew who wear leather gloves or other impermeable gloves as hand protection during work may share tools and equipment without disinfecting the tools between each user and must continue to clean and wash hands to break the chain of infection. Leather gloves may have droplets on them and could transmit infection to another worker. Assign and label leather gloves to ensure each pair remains with one crew.

## Boat Procedures

### Arrival

All guests should be given a **COVID-19 Pre-Trip Declaration** to sign 14 days prior to their excursion. The statement should have the following information in it:

- Name(s)
- Age of guest (for purposes of COVID-19 Health Authorities is required)
- Address and phone number
- Name and phone number of family doctor
- A statement relating to being symptom free for 14 days prior to signing the document

Upon arrival, each guest should sign another Declaration stating they have been symptom free for 14 days. Refer to *Appendix A*.

### Cleaning, Disinfecting and Sanitizing Procedures

Since viruses can survive on surfaces in the environment for a period of time, it is vital to increase cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing protocols on high-touch surfaces and in high traffic areas. Note that protocols in Appendix B have been developed for high touch surfaces and high traffic areas.

While Covid-19 has been shown to be able to survive on surfaces for a period of time, there is little evidence to suggest that the virus can transfer from a surface to a human after sitting on the

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surface for a period of more than 48 hours. If a high-touch surface has not been used for 48 hours, then cleaning it prior to the next use should not be required.

Further, the cleaning/disinfecting is only necessary for a particular surface if the user of that surface is changing. If a piece of equipment is only being used by one person for the duration of an expedition/tour, then it should not require routine cleaning throughout the tour.

In an unplanned situation, where a person must touch a surface that has not been cleaned, and cleaning is not possible at that time, then appropriate PPE (ideally gloves) should be used until cleaning is possible. Therefore, when working with guests, crew should always carry gloves with them.

Additionally, equipment/surfaces should not need to be cleaned/disinfected after every use where the only people using that surface are within the same Working Group.

These points are raised simply because cleaning/disinfecting surfaces in a wilderness setting, where there is no access to the general public, and the only people present are working within small and cohesive groups (Working Groups) (with restricted access to cleaning materials – even water in many instances), a routine cleaning of every surface after every use is likely to be of little practical value.

### *Definitions*

- **Cleaning:** Refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- **Sanitizing:** Food grade sanitizers are used after cleaning to reduce the level of bacteria to a safe level when following the manufacturer's instruction for concentration and contact time. Sanitizers are used on food contact surfaces. When sanitizers are used at the no-rinse concentration level it does not need to be rinsed off with clean potable water.
- **Disinfecting:** Refers to using chemicals, for example, Public Health Agency of Canada recommended disinfectants to kill bacteria and viruses on surfaces.<sup>2</sup> This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

**Disinfectants are different from sanitizers in that they have a greater ability to destroy bacteria, viruses, and molds. Disinfectants are used at a higher concentration and require a longer contact time than sanitizers. If a food grade disinfectant is used on a food contact surface, it may need to be rinsed off with potable water.**

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### *Know Your Products*

Surfaces must be cleaned on a regular basis with an approved detergent. Cleaning removes the physical contaminants that are on a surface. This is followed by rinsing with clean, potable water. Cleaned surfaces must then be sanitized (food contact surfaces) or disinfected (nonfood contact surfaces). Review with crew how to use and verify the concentration of sanitizers and disinfectants used in food preparation areas

Hard-surface disinfectants must meet Health Canada's requirements for emerging viral pathogens. These authorized disinfectants may be used against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. This means they are one of the easiest viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant when used according to the label directions.

To find out which disinfectant meets Health Canada's requirements for COVID-19, click on the link below:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

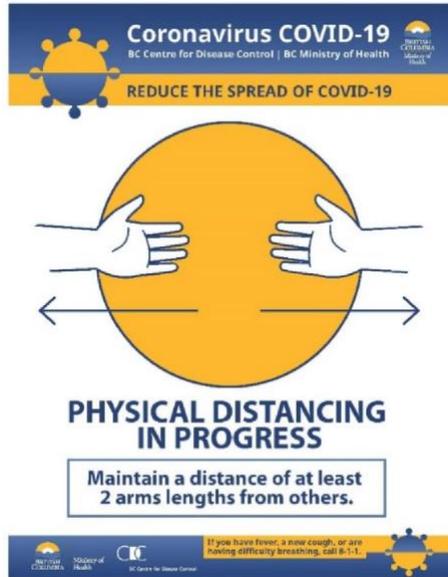
In Canada, disinfectants must have a DIN (drug identification number). Some disinfectant/sanitizer products are the same chemical. It can be used as a disinfectant when used at a higher concentration and longer contact time or as a sanitizer when used at a lower concentration and shorter contact time. For example, bleach is considered a disinfectant when used at 1000 to 5000 ppm with a 10-minute contact time but is considered a sanitizer when used at 100 to 200 ppm with a 2-minute contact time. To prepare a bleach solution consult the [FOODSAFE online bleach calculator](#).

**CAUTION:** Operators must confirm with their chemical suppliers to ensure that sanitizers or disinfectants are appropriate for use against COVID-19. Always ensure that the disinfectant you use is approved for use in a food processing or food service application. Some disinfectants can be toxic and are unsuitable for food preparation areas or food contact surfaces:

[Canadian Drug and Health Products list of registered Sanitizers and Disinfectants.](#)

[Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 | US EPA \(List N\)](#)

[Infection Control information on BCCDC](#)



[Download a free physical distancing poster from the BCCDC.](#)

COVID-19 posters for the general public and crew encouraging good hand washing are to be posted in appropriate locations, where they will be most noticed. [Download a free hand washing poster from the BCCDC.](#)

## Housekeeping

Please refer to the [British Columbia Hotel Association COVID-19 guide for resources for all accommodation related information.](#)

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

There is currently no information to support the wearing of masks (especially N95) outside of health care settings. Social distancing, along with proper hygiene (i.e., washing your hands), is the best way to reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection.

- Crew should wear gloves if there is a potential for them to be exposed to an infected individual or contaminated items. Ensure crew know the correct procedure for glove removal and disposal (we also recommend that you print this poster off and post in your housekeeping and laundry areas). Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime, and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface.
- Disinfecting refers to using a chemical to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important to reduce the spread of infection.

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- Increase the frequency of cleaning & disinfection of high-traffic areas and high-use items such as doorknobs/handles, handrails, buttons, light switches, washrooms, and tables.
  - Use a disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a viricidal claim. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to disinfect effectively. Alternatively, use a bleach/water solution with 100 ml of unscented household bleach per 900 ml of water.
  - Be sure to take the appropriate precautions when using chemicals for cleaning and disinfecting. Consult the products Safety Data Sheets and use PPE if required. Crew should be trained to remove PPE without contaminating hands.
  - **Do not mix bleach with vinegar, ammonia, or rubbing alcohol, as this produces toxic results. In addition, hydrogen peroxide combined with vinegar is highly corrosive.**
  - Review cleaning & disinfection and [disposable glove](#) procedures with all crew, not only those responsible for housekeeping.
  - **Place hand sanitizer stations in high traffic areas.**

## Laundry

- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry and discard after each use. Immediately wash hands thoroughly after gloves are removed.
- If possible, do not shake laundry (minimizes possibility of dispersing virus through the air).
- Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance for environmental cleaning; consider using a bag liner that is disposable or a liner that can be laundered.
- Launder any removable cloth/plush items.
- Steam cleaning can be used for areas that are likely to be contaminated but cannot be laundered (plush chairs).

## Food and Beverage

Provincial orders and guidelines for [Food and Beverage Services](#) will be followed

Display signs at your dining area outlining the special measures that you are taking. This could include instructions regarding physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and not entering if feeling unwell. You may also stipulate the maximum number of guests permitted in the dining area at any one time. Signs will help guests remember to maintain physical distancing. When signage is not practical due to the interior arrangement of the vessel, clearly explain and demonstrate the measures needed to ensure physical distancing.

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Where possible, implement measures to minimize handling of shared food and items that may touch another person's food, such as:

- Discontinue self-serve buffet lines—have designated crew dispense food.
- Minimize handling of multiple sets of cutlery.
- Remove shared food containers from dining areas (e.g. shared pitchers of water, shared coffee cream dispensers, salt and pepper shakers, ketchup, vinegar, etc.) . Consider replacing with one-time use or single serving containers to minimize commonly touched surfaces.
- Dispense snacks directly to crew/guests and use pre-packaged snacks only.
- Ensure that food-handling crew practice good hand hygiene.
- Ensure that all surfaces of the tables and chairs are cleaned and disinfected before each meal.

Rearrange seating to ensure physical distance guidelines are observed (at least 2 metres).

Continue to use approved sanitizers and disinfectants for their designed purposes.

Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces dishware, utensils, food preparation surfaces, and beverage equipment after use.

Ensure crew and customers with COVID-19 symptoms, stay away from the food preparation and dining areas.

Communicate your sanitation controls to your crew and monitor them. Enhance your vessels sanitation plan and schedule, review with all crew for input and assign cleaning duties accordingly.

Please refer to Appendix B for a product guide for disinfectants.

## Galley Procedures

- Work with minimal crew to allow sufficient space for physical distancing. Consider re-arranging work areas or re-organizing work tasks to allow workers to maintain distance.
- Move activities to another room wherever possible. Separating duties into unused dining areas could be an option for some preparation and packaging.
- Using markings or dividers in the galley to ensure physical distancing.
- Wash equipment and utensils using a dishwasher that can achieve disinfection. If washing by hand, use the three-sink process (wash, rinse, sanitize), ensuring that all equipment is disinfected.

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## Food Safety

Normal cooking temperatures for foods will kill COVID-19 and other microbes in food. As with other microbes our advice is to always use a thermometer to check that the internal temperature of the food has reached 74°C

There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread through eating or touching raw fruits or vegetables. When preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, wash or scrub them under cold, running, potable tap water prior to consumption. Prevent cross contamination by keeping fruits and vegetables separate from raw foods. Only handle (touch) the fresh fruits and vegetables that will be washed or cooked immediately to limit any hand transfer of germs.

## Transportation

Crew will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on board the vessels using an alcohol-based cleaner or disinfecting wipes/spray and paper towel; if these are unavailable, use soap and water.

Key contact points are:

- Door handles (inside and out)
- Steering wheel and controls
- Radio controls and buttons
- Hand rails and ladders

Crew will also ensure:

- to increase the air flow through the cabin and enclosed areas of the vessel
- that when tending to a sick traveler, cleaning body fluids or potentially contaminated items and surfaces, they should wear disposable gloves, gowns, and masks.
- that guests who become ill will be isolated and quarantined until a diagnosis is made by a qualified medical examiner.

When more than one person is traveling, physical distancing practices apply. Shared travel with more than one person should be minimized wherever possible. Here are some options:

### Tenders (zodiacs, and skiffs)

- Load and offload guests one at a time to avoid congestion and crowding.
- Allow for enough time for guests to disembark from the tender to allow for adequate distancing and prevent crowding.
- Create spacing between guests such as staggering where people sit (e.g. aisle to window, alternating per row).
- If 2 metres (6 feet) separation is not possible, masks should be worn.
- Consider having the tender wiped down before each trip.

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- Hand washing facilities or sanitizer must be made available before and after the excursion in the tender.

### **Aircraft (floatplanes)**

All air operators must comply with the *Interim Order to Prevent Certain Persons from Boarding Flights in Canada due to COVID-19*, pursuant to sub-section 6.41 (1) of the Aeronautics Act, effective April 17, 2020, which repeals the previous version signed on April 9, 2020.

All guests (domestic and outbound) must be notified that they will be required to undergo a health check and a verification that they are carrying a non-medical mask or face covering, to which they must answer truthfully.

### **Air operators are to follow Transport Canada's Recommended Traveler Management Sequencing for Operators**

## **Guest and Crew Travel**

- All guests and crew must comply with [Transport Canada guidelines](#) for air and marine travel while travelling to and from the vessel departure location. This directive requires appropriate face masks to be worn in any form of transport involving land, air, or marine travel. All travellers will be asked to cover their mouth and nose:
- at Canadian airport screening checkpoints, where the screeners cannot always keep two metres of separation between themselves and the traveller;
- when they cannot physically distance from others, or as directed by the airline employees; and
- when directed to do so by a public health order or public health official.
- This may apply during their tour onboard the vessel depending on the mode of transportation being used and proximity to other guests and crew who do not live in the same domicile.
- The physical distancing of 2 meters (minimum of 6 feet) is the primary objective for travel in the open air or closed compartment transport where it can be practically achieved. Where it cannot be achieved in open-air transport or in any closed compartment transport face mask must be worn at all times
- Handwashing with warm soap and water and where not possible with hand sanitizer must occur pre and post each transportation event/occurrence.
- All guests and crew must comply with [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) face mask directives for cloth or disposable face masks when required.
- Guests must provide their own compliant facemasks and have sufficient quantities for the duration of travel to and from the vessel departure location.
- Guests and crew must carry sufficient hand sanitizer for each leg of the transportation to and from the vessel departure location.

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## Use of Face Coverings (See Appendix C)

- Face coverings are protective layers of absorbent fabric (such as cotton) that snugly fit over the nose and mouth and are secured to the face with ties or ear loops. Guests and crew should be made aware of the recommendation by public health officials of the benefits to wearing a face covering while in public or when physical distancing is not possible.
- cloth masks can be laundered with other items using a hot cycle, and then dried thoroughly
- non-medical masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled, or crumpled
- dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin

### **Coverings SHOULD:**

- Be made of multiple layers of absorbent fabric (such as cotton)
- Cover the mouth and nose without gaps
- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Allow for easy breathing
- Be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- Stay the same shape after machine washing and drying

### **Coverings SHOULD NOT:**

- Be placed on children under the age of 2
- Be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing
- Be made exclusively of plastic sheeting or materials that easily fall apart (e.g. tissues)
- Be shared with others
- Impair vision or interfere with tasks
- Require the guest/crew to continuously adjust the face covering

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# Front Office and Administration

- Given the unforeseen nature of the COVID-19 situation, SSTOABC members should **consider relaxing their cancellation policies.**
- **Increase the frequency of cleaning & disinfection of high-traffic areas** and high-use items such as, handrails, PIN pads, keyboards, counters, and pens.
- Reduce cross contamination by **asking guests to hold up identification for staff to view** instead of holding it in their hands.
- **Have separate pens for guests and staff use.** Disinfect guest pens after each use.
- **Increase the frequency of cleaning & disinfection for shared use computers.**

## Your staff

- Report respiratory illness to your employer and do not come to work for at least 14 days following the onset of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath. Contact 811 if requiring further health advice and 911 if an emergency.
- Practice social distancing to reduce the risk of getting sick. Avoid close contact (within 2 meters), when possible, with other staff.
- Ensure employee illness policy is up-to-date and communicated to staff.
- Discuss [BCCDC recommendations](#) for transmission prevention (washing hands, staying home if you are unwell, etc.) with all of your staff.
- Meet with your staff regularly to discuss what is going on and to address their questions and concerns.
- The Government of Canada has a [mental health help guide](#), or you can call Crisis Services Canada at 1-833-456-4566 for any staff who need additional support.
- Discourage your staff from travelling outside of Canada. **Require that any staff members who are returning from outside of Canada self-isolate for 14 days, even if they do not show [symptoms](#).**
- If your operation has difficulty maintaining hours for staff, encourage employees to take any available vacation. Should you be forced to lay staff off, you are [able to do so temporarily](#), according to the Government of British Columbia's [Employment Standards Code](#). Please see our [QuickLinks web page](#) for the proper procedure to do this, and a sample layoff letter you can use.
- If a member of your staff needs to be quarantined, or if you have to make the difficult decision to lay staff off, direct them to the BCHA's [Resources for Employees](#) for information on programs and resources available to help them. If your operation's finances permit, consider topping up employees' wages during their quarantine period.
- To help employees access Employment Insurance and other supports, provide them access to your computers. Be sure to disinfect computers and surrounding surfaces after each use.



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# Appendix A – Guest Pre-Trip Screening

This prescreening is to be administered prior to allowing the guest to participate in their trip.

If you are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or live with someone who has COVID-19, please do not come on board. Call your doctor or the local public health officials. If in BC, you may call 8-1-1. Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19, will not be permitted on board. So, if you do not feel well, please stay home.

Physical distancing is required at all times (minimum of 2 metres). No handshaking, or hugging etc. Failure to observe physical distancing guidelines could terminate your trip. If physical distancing is not possible, all guests and crew should wear a mask.

If possible, while in transit to and from the vessel please bring your own sanitizer and use it every time you touch a shared surface such as shared door handles (dining room, washroom doors, vehicle interiors, etc.).

Following the recommendations of Health Canada, we encourage all guests to wear a mask or face covering whenever unable to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. This will be in vehicles, vessels, and aircraft but may be required in other circumstances as well. Please bring your own masks/face coverings.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you have a fever and a cough? **[If YES or guest refuses to answer, deny boarding.]**
2. Do you have a fever and breathing difficulty? **[If YES or guest refuses to answer, deny boarding.]**
3. Have you been refused boarding in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19? **[If YES or guest refuses to answer, deny boarding.]**
4. Are you currently under mandatory quarantine as a result of recent travel or by orders from the provincial, territorial, or local public health authorities? **[If YES,]** Has a federal, provincial, or territorial health authority given you explicit permission to continue your onward journey by air to reach your self-isolation location? **[If No explicit permission, deny boarding. If the guest refuses to answer the question, deny boarding.]**
5. Do you have a removable mask or face covering with which to cover your mouth and nose while involved in your trip? **[If NO, or if the guest refuses to answer, provide a mask to the guest, or deny boarding.]**

Guest is to sign and date this form prior to access being granted.

# Appendix B – Product Guide for Disinfectants

PRODUCT	DEFINITION	APPLICATION	PROTECTION LEVEL
Multi-Surface Cleaner	Use full-strength or dilute 250 mL per 4 Litre of warm water, apply to the surface until thoroughly wet. Wipe with a clean cloth, sponge, or mop. To Sanitize/Disinfect: Preclean surface Apply to surface until thoroughly wet. To Sanitize: Leave for 1 minute before wiping. To Disinfect: Leave for 10 minutes before wiping. Rinse all food contact surfaces with water after using the product	Disinfectant that meet Health Canada's, requirements for emerging viral pathogens. These authorized disinfectants may be used against SARS-CoV-2	Advanced disinfectant and sanitizer for Hard surfaces
Bleach (6%) solution	100/1 dilution of sodium hypochlorite solution with water used to disinfect surfaces, 10 mL bleach to 1 Litre of water. Minimum contact time of 10 minutes in a single application. Air dry.	Recommended by the BCCDC for disinfecting nonporous surfaces	General use disinfectant and sanitizer for Hard surfaces
Neutral Disinfectant cleaner	Use 3.9 mL per liter of water for a minimum contact time of 10 minutes in a single application. Can be applied with a mop, sponge, cloth, coarse spray or by soaking. The recommended use solution is prepared fresh for each use then discarded. Air dry.	Approved for use against COVID-19 disinfecting nonporous surfaces	Advanced disinfectant and sanitizer for Hard surfaces, low acidity
Disinfecting Wet Wipes 70% Alcohol	To sanitize / disinfect: Pre-clean surface. Use 70% alcohol based fresh wipes to thoroughly wet surface. To sanitize: Allow surface to remain wet for 10 seconds. Air dry.	Single use isopropyl alcohol wet wipes, disposable	Safe to use on electronics including Smartphones, Tablets and POS equipment
Touch Free Hand Sanitizer	Minimum 70% alcohol hand sanitizer solution, rub hands together until dry.	To clean hands if Hand washing is not available	General use to kill bacteria and viruses

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# Appendix C – Safe use of non-medical masks

## Removable masks or face coverings **SHOULD**:

- Be made of multiple layers of absorbent fabric (e.g., cotton)
- Cover the mouth and nose (without big gaps)
- Fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- Allow for easy breathing
- Be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- Stay the same shape after machine washing and drying

## Removable masks or face coverings **SHOULD NOT**:

- Be placed on children under the age of 2
- Be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance
- Be made exclusively of plastic sheeting or materials that easily fall apart (e.g., tissues)
- Be shared with others
- Impair vision or interfere with tasks

## When using a removable mask or face covering:

- Wash hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off (in addition to practicing good hand hygiene while wearing it)
- It should fit well (non-gaping)
- Allow for easy breathing
- Do not share it with others

## When wearing a mask or face covering, take the following precautions:

- Avoid touching the face covering or mask while using it
- Change a cloth face covering or mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled
- Put it directly into the wash
- Cloth face coverings or masks can be laundered with other items using a hot cycle, and then dried thoroughly
- Non-medical masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled, or crumpled
- Dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin

