

Responding to COVID-19 cases in a community event or activity

As an organizer of an event or activity, you may become aware of one or more cases of COVID-19 among participants. By the time people test positive, they often have already infected others. One identified case of COVID-19 may mean there was or is active spread of the virus at your activity or event, as transmission can happen quickly and not all cases are detected.

Public Health is asking people who test positive to take a more active role in notifying people they may have exposed. If you become aware of cases in your event or activity, you must respect the medical privacy of participants and keep their status confidential. However, you can share general information with participants about self-monitoring and immunization.

You can take the following steps to reduce the risk of spread:

1. **Help the person who is a case of COVID-19 to share information with their close contacts.** They should be advising anyone that they had close contact with while infectious to self-isolate or self-monitor depending on vaccination status. Information about who should self-isolate vs self-monitor is available at [Close contacts \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca).
2. Encourage COVID-19 vaccination through getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca for people who have not already done so. Walk-in vaccine clinics may also be available.
3. Review your Communicable Disease plan and ensure all employees and volunteers understand it.
4. Encourage **mask use at all events you organize.**
5. Ensure that people are **not allowed to enter events or activities if they have any symptoms of COVID-19.**
6. **Pause recurring events or activities if you are seeing multiple cases of COVID-19.** Multiple cases can mean that there are cases that you do not know about (for example, a missed original case that infected several people). If multiple cases are seen, sports and fitness activities in particular should be cancelled until the self-monitoring period is over.
7. Review the next page to determine if **further safety measures** can be taken at your site.

If you are an employer and would like to discuss how to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread at your location, please do one of the following:

- Call WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 1-888-621-7233 (toll-free within B.C.)
- Call and leave a message with Northern Health's Public Health Protection line at 250-565-7322. In your message you must provide the following:

- Your Full Business name and location
- Name of person calling
- Call back number

RESOURCES TO DECREASE COVID-19 RISK AT EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Visit the following resources to learn more about decreasing the risk of spread of COVID-19 at events and activities that you organize:

Organizing safer social gatherings

Follow all public health orders related to social gatherings. Information about these orders and about safety measures at social gatherings can be found here: [Safer Social Interactions \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca/health-services/public-health/communicable-diseases/covid-19/safer-social-interactions).

Understand and implement public health orders for organized events

You can find information about your responsibilities as an event organizer, including expectations around checking vaccine cards, here: [Event Planning \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca/health-services/public-health/communicable-diseases/covid-19/event-planning).

Communicable Disease plan

Businesses should have a communicable disease plan. The goal of the communicable disease plan is to reduce the spread of illness at your business. Your business's communicable disease plan should include as much of your COVID-19 safety plan as feasible. See WorkSafeBC for more information on communicable disease plans at: [Communicable disease prevention: a guide for employers \(WorkSafeBC\)](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/communicable-disease-prevention-a-guide-for-employers).

Masking of staff and patrons

Event and gathering organizers are encouraged to recommend that participants mask while indoors, especially when they are unable to maintain at least 2 metre distance. Masks must cover the nose and mouth. Face shields are not an adequate substitute. Well-fitting, medical grade masks are better than cloth masks, especially respirator grade masks like N95s. More information about choosing effective masks can be found here: [COVID-19 mask use: Types of masks and respirators \(Canada.ca\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/covid-19/mask-use-types-of-masks-and-respirators).

Ventilation

While physical distancing reduces the risk of COVID-19 spread, COVID-19 can still spread at longer distances, especially in poorly ventilated areas. Take advantage of every opportunity to increase ventilation or use better ventilated areas, including maintaining your HVAC system, opening windows, and holding meetings/taking breaks in larger spaces or outdoors. More information about the role of ventilation in reducing the spread of COVID-19 can be found here: [COVID-19: Guidance on indoor ventilation during the pandemic \(Canada.ca\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/covid-19/guidance-on-indoor-ventilation-during-the-pandemic).

Encourage all participants to get their COVID-19 vaccinations

- COVID-19 vaccination is highly recommended to protect participants' health and the health of those they come into contact with.
- COVID-19 vaccination will help to prevent future cases at your events and activities. It takes up to 2 weeks for the vaccine to start to work and build up some protection against COVID-19.
- Even once vaccinated, participants should continue to follow all communicable disease infection control measures at the site and in the community to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- As an organizer, you may be required to check that participants are vaccinated. Even if you are not required to check vaccination cards, you can encourage participants to be vaccinated for their own health and to protect their community.

Stay up to date on COVID-19 measures in your community

We need to continue to work together to slow the transmission of COVID-19. Thank you for doing everything you can to keep yourself, your participants, and your community healthy.

Visit the [Northern Health COVID-19](#) webpage for up to date information specific to the Northern Health region and for more resources.