

## COVID-19 PROTOCOL – MARCH 30, 2020

The novel coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19, has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization after it spread worldwide, Doctors and health officials are urging people to practise social distancing, limiting large gatherings, and have closed all schools and daycares in order to limit the spread of the disease.

We are closely and continuously monitoring the situation and are prepared to respond to any change in the status of the outbreak. Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace is the responsibility of every employee at Backwoods. This protocol provides more information on how we can all uphold this important obligation.

*Note: client requirements which are more stringent, than the requirements in this protocol, must be followed.*

Backwoods Emergency Preparedness Team will be evaluating office closures on a continuous basis and will update employees accordingly.

To protect yourself and others:

- stay home and away from others if sick or in isolation
- wash hands often
- cover coughs and sneezes
- avoid touching face with unwashed hands
- avoid travel outside Canada

Identifying and isolating people infected with COVID-19 is the only way to stop the spread. The symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough or other cold or influenza-like symptoms. Use this online screening tool Alberta Health Services has provided an [online assessment](#) to help determine whether you need to call 811 to get tested.

As of March 25, 2020 – As per the [Government of Alberta](#) - All employees are **legally required** to self-isolate for 10 days if they have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition. **Employees with these symptoms are not permitted to come to work.** (See the Quarantine section below for Backwoods requirements).

Employees are expected to implement social distancing and employ workplans that minimize close contact by:

- limiting time interactions with other employees to what is necessary,
- conducting meetings virtually (if applicable),
- limiting group sizes for tailgate and safety meetings to less than 10 people and practicing 2-meter (6 feet) social distancing requirements.
- coordinating with supervisors to stagger tailgate/safety meeting times for large projects and shops,
- avoiding signing on to each others FLHAs, and instead writing down the names of people who are working in your area and are aware of the hazards associated with your and their tasks,
- not sharing pens and other tools,
- sanitizing work vehicles and reducing the number of passengers travelling in one vehicle at any given time.
- staggering coffee and lunch breaks to ensure reduced number of people in single areas,
- staggering meals (for out of town employees) to ensure reduced number of people in single areas, or

- implementing other creative strategies to reduce the density of employees.

We will be following all client mandated protocols on our existing projects and will be communicating these protocols as they come available.

We all need be especially attentive to employees who may be at a higher risk for Covid-19. **All employees who are experiencing cold and flu symptoms are not permitted to come to work.** Employees with compromised immune systems that are able to work from home are strongly encouraged to work from home until further notice.

### QUARANTINE PROTOCOL

Employees are **legally required** to follow municipal, provincial and federal quarantine directives. Additionally, employees must follow quarantine directives if they have been notified by a government agency that they are suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19.

- **Mandatory** 14-day **self-isolation for returning international travellers** or close contacts of people with confirmed COVID-19.
- **Mandatory** 10-day **self-isolation for people with symptoms** that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat.

Employees are **legally required to self-isolate for 10 days** if they have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition. **Employees with these symptoms are not permitted to come to work.**

**Employees who have been quarantined** (either directed or self quarantine) prior to March 25, 2020 must continue to remain quarantined for their existing 14-day period.

Employees who are quarantined (either directed or self quarantine) are expected to comply with the 10 and/or 14 day quarantine duration (or as specified by provincial/federal health authorities), and are free of all symptoms. A return to work approval must be established by the HR Manager with the employee.

Employees who are directed to be quarantined or are self-quarantined are required to:

- Notify their manager/supervisor and HR Manager
- NOT come to the workplace (site or office).

Employees who are self-quarantined are expected to work from home if they have the capability to do so and will be paid as per our normal payroll process.

Salaried employees who are quarantined and are not able to work from home are eligible to apply for short term disability benefits. Contact the HR Manager to receive the required benefits forms to initiate short term disability.

Hourly employees who are quarantined and are not able to work are eligible to apply for to **EI benefits through the Canadian Government and Alberta Emergency Isolation Support.**

## WORKING FROM HOME

Employees, whose roles can be conducted remotely, who self-quarantine or personal circumstances require them to work from home (i.e. school/daycare closures), can work from home.

Employees, who are impacted, whose roles can be conducted remotely, can work from home. If required, flexible work hours are available to employees who are working from home – these employees must make arrangements with their Manager.

[The Alberta government has announced at a news conference on Sunday](#) (March 15<sup>th</sup>), the shut down of all schools, post-secondary institutions and daycares due to the "unprecedented" threat of COVID-19. The Government expects that all "Students and Children will stay home at this time".

Employees who are impacted by these closures and are able to work remotely, must notify their manager, and collect the required equipment and/or materials needed to conduct their work.

All managers must communicate the names of their team members, who are working from home, to HR Manager.

## DISINFECTING PROTOCOLS

- We are providing disinfecting cleaners (i.e. Lysol, Clorox, etc.) to all locations. The location of the cleaners will be communicated to employees at each respective site.
- Open food, shared snacks, etc. are not permitted and must be removed from offices immediately. Personal meals must be stored in sealed containers. We will be removing access to communal dishes and utensils – Employees must use their own dishes and utensils and clean these at home. Employees must disinfect the kitchen after each use.
- **Non-essential visitors** are not permitted in all office locations. Non-essential visitors are people **(internal and external) who are not required for daily operations at a particular Backwoods location**. All meetings must be conducted by teleconference or using other forms of technology.
- Employees must disinfect their work areas and frequently used items such as, phones, keyboards and mouse, **each day**.
- **All meeting rooms** must be wiped down with an infecting cleaner **after each use**.
- We are working with our janitorial services to ensure that they are conducting additional disinfecting measures at of our office locations.
- All frequently touched worksurfaces, vehicles and communal areas on all active project sites must be washed and sanitized thoroughly throughout the day and at the beginning and end of each shift. All disinfecting must be conducted following Backwoods' **COVID-19 Safe Work Practice/Procedure**.

## **TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS**

### **Business Travel Restrictions**

- All discretionary business travel is not permitted unless approved by their manager in writing; employees are to utilize alternative means, such as video and teleconferencing. Business Travel outside of Canada is not permitted.
- Employees are not permitted to attend large gatherings unless approved by their manager in writing. (gatherings with more than 50 attendees )
- Employees who are currently working out of town and experience symptoms related to COVID-19:
  - Stay in your room/residence;
  - Notify your manager/supervisor;
  - Call 8-1-1 and report your symptoms;
  - Follow the instructions from Healthlink (8-1-1). DO NOT go to a physician's office, health care facility or lab without consulting with Healthlink (8-1-1) first. Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention and inform them that you may have COVID-19.

### **Personal Travel**

Alberta Health Services has advised Albertans not to travel anywhere outside the country.

- All employees who choose to travel outside of Canada are required to report their travel plans to the HR Manager prior to travel and self-isolate for 14 days once they return, no matter which country they visited.
- Employees are expected to stay informed about travel advisories - for information on travel advisories, visit:
  - Alberta Health Services
  - Government of Canada

**We recognize this is a fluid situation and will be providing updates on changes our protocols as required. Contact the HR Manager or HSE Manager for any additional information or questions.**