

COVID-19 Underserved Population, Marginally Housed

GENERAL - Environmental Site Checklist

Shelters and Facilities for Temporary Housing



Objective: This checklist is for professionals such as nurses, social workers, primary care providers, and outreach workers when providing services to clients in shelters or facilities with temporary housing.

Method: Use this checklist as a guide to review the site on environmental health best practices. The line items below intend to offer topics that may warrant further consideration—recognizing any site-specific nuances and operational procedures.

Entrances:

- Plexi-glass or 2-meter buffer provided at front desk (with visual cues, e.g. floor stickers).
- Hand sanitizer provided upon entry.
- Signage placed at entrance to preclude those that are unwell or exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms.
- Are masks being offered to residents? Are they maintained in a sanitary location?

Physical distancing:

- Is there attention given to a one-way flow in and out of the shelter?
- For spaces where distancing may be a challenge (e.g. elevators), are efforts being made to limit occupancy?
- Is signage observed to educate on physical distancing?
- If sleeping areas are congregate, ensure that the head-to-toe placement of beds is a minimum 2 meters apart.
- Is there consideration to orienting or spacing out of furniture to create physical distancing?

Hygiene:

- Reminder to staff and volunteers that they should NOT be working if showing any signs and symptoms themselves.
- Ensure that handwashing facilities are functioning and adequate for client ratio, i.e.:
 - 1 sink per room
 - 1 per 15-20 people in indoor open space (e.g. arena or community centre).
- Ensure that washrooms and showers are functional with adequate supplies of soap, paper towel and hot/cold running water.
- Ensure the recommended hand sanitizer is available in secure and strategic locations (e.g. at the entrance, near the front desk, by elevators, in common areas).
- Laundry facilities are available, functioning, and there is a process for staggering use.
- A minimum ration of at least one toilet per 20 users, with toilet paper in dispensers, paired with nearby handwashing facilities.

Food safety:

- All food distributed by organizations must be approved by the local Environmental Health Officer.
- Mealtimes in communal settings should be staggered to reduce crowding and facilitate distancing.
- Buffet style food service is discouraged unless provisions are made to ensure food is protected from potential contamination, i.e. sneeze guards are present, hand washing or hand sanitizer amenities are provided before entering the buffet line.
- Remove shared food containers from dining areas (e.g. shared pitchers, salt & pepper shakers).
- No more than six persons at a table.

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Other safety conditions:

- Is garbage pick up at a frequency to prevent accumulation?
- Are sharps disposal containers provided?
- Are the floors, walls, and ceiling in good repair?
- Is there an environmental cleaning schedule present? Is it being followed?
- Is there any evidence of pest issues?
- Are there security measures in place for site?
- Are there female and male specific security measures implemented, e.g. are privacy for hygiene considered differently for women and men?
- Is there a trauma informed practice lens for both men and women respective to violence and safety?
- Is there access to safer sex and harm reduction supplies made available?
- Is there an overdose prevention site present? If so, has current guidance about overdose response and cleaning been provided?

Signage:

- Observe signage to educate on:
 - Physical distancing
 - Primary screening for symptoms must occur at all entrances to the facility.
 - Reminding persons to self-isolate if they have symptoms -- Is there a mechanism to inform residents what to do if they become symptomatic, e.g., instructions provided in the rooms or posted in conspicuous location(s)?
 - Respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
- Is signage accessible (e.g. for varying literacy levels and in applicable languages)?

Staff education:

- Provide education on:
 - Cleaning and disinfection, including information on proper sanitization procedures, identification of high touch surfaces, and recommended frequency.
 - Cleaning schedule posted and visible for all staff to monitor compliance.
 - Physical distancing
 - Respiratory etiquette
 - Hand hygiene
 - Proper use of PPE (e.g. masks, gloves)
 - COVID-19 Safety Plan – where is this located, and what training has occurred on the Plan?

**If you have further questions or identify concerns,
contact your local Environmental Health Department for further guidance.**
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-protection-environmental-services-locations>

Additional Resources

Alberta Health Services (July 6, 2020). *Shelter Guidance: Preventing, Controlling and Managing COVID-19*. Retrieved from: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-outbreak-shelter.pdf>

BCCDC (2020). *Signage & posters*. Located at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/signage-posters>

BCCDC (2020). *Social services providers – information for those that work with vulnerable populations*. Retrieved at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/community-settings/social-services-providers>

Public Health Agency of Canada (July 29, 2020). *Guidance for providers of services for people experiencing homelessness (in the context of COVID-19)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/homelessness.html>

Public Health Ontario (updated Oct. 2, 2020). *COVID-19 Resources for Congregate Living Settings*. Retrieved at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/congregate-living-settings-resources>

Vancouver Coastal Health (April 2020). *Environmental health & inspections – Housing resources*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vch.ca/public-health/environmental-health-inspections>

Toward the heart (2020). *Peer Engagement resources*. Found at: <https://towardtheheart.com/peer-engagement>