

COVID-19 SAFETY PLANS REINSTATED FOR BC EMPLOYERS

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Earlier today, the BC Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, announced that the BC Government is introducing a new Public Health Order reinstating COVID-19 Safety Plans in BC workplaces as a result of increasing infection rates due to the Omicron variant (the **"Reinstated Order"**). The Reinstated Order will not apply to employers in the childcare sector, K-12 and post-secondary sectors.

In our article dated July 3, 2021, we provided an update that the BC Government had repealed the *Workplace and Post-Secondary Institution Safety Public Health Order* (the **"Order"**). The Order required employers to maintain a COVID-19 Safety Plan in the workplace, including a requirement that facemasks be worn in indoor common areas (with some limited exceptions such as when employees are separated by physical barriers), and that employees complete daily health checks before entering the workplace. The Order was repealed with effect from July 1, 2021, and employers were advised to transition from COVID-19 Safety Plans to Communicable Disease Plans.

Under the new Reinstated Order, BC employers will once again be required to implement COVID-19 Safety Plans in their workplaces. While the Reinstated Order is yet to be published, Dr. Henry announced today that BC employers must again implement COVID-19 Safety Plans to address the layers of protection that applied previously under the Order, such as physical barriers, reduce crowding and mixing among employees in the workplace, permitting employees to work from home, and facilitating employees to stay at home when they are feeling ill. Dr. Henry indicated that reinstating these layers of protection in the workplace will reduce the impact of Omicron on businesses and will allow businesses to continue operating, a strategy that helped BC employers during the earlier stages of the pandemic.

Dr. Henry also indicated that the BC Government is working with WorkSafeBC to reactivate their support for businesses and to address questions from employers.

Employers are advised to review their COVID-19 Safety Plans and to ensure that employees are aware of what is required of them with respect to safety precautions in the workplace. We will provide a further update once the Reinstated Order is published.

by [Dianne Rideout](#) and [Michelle McKinnon](#)

A Cautionary Note

The foregoing provides only an overview and does not constitute legal advice. Readers are cautioned against making any decisions based on this material alone. Rather, specific legal advice should be obtained.

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