



ELECTION OFFICES AND POLLING PLACES COVID-19 SAFE WORKPLACE PLAN

MASK REQUIRED



Protect each other when you're in shared indoor spaces.

Wear a mask that covers your nose, mouth and chin.

And remember to keep your distance.

This does not apply to people who cannot wear a mask because they have a medical condition or a disability

The mask can be cloth or disposable.

Assess yourself for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Use this self-assessment tool to help determine whether you should be tested for COVID-19. You can complete this assessment yourself or on behalf of someone else if they are not capable.

i Yukon's testing strategy was expanded effective Wednesday, July 15, 2020 to find new cases and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

For all persons, if you have or have not travelled but have any the following symptoms, no matter how mild:

- fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of sense of taste or smell, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea or muscle aches

[Start your self-assessment](#)

To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer if handwashing facilities are not available and maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.

This self-assessment tool may change as new information becomes available. Last updated September 24, 2020.

<https://service.yukon.ca/en/covid-19-self-assessment>

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Introduction

In the Yukon Government's 'Essential Services During COVID-19 in Yukon', election personnel have been designated as essential in providing services and functions required to maintain the reliable operation of infrastructure essential for the health, safety and economic well-being of Yukon's population.

This service includes those performed by election officials who work in voting places during a territorial general election or by-election. The 19 returning offices are open to the public daily during the election period of approximately five weeks. The 45 polling places across the territory are staffed by election officials and are workplaces that operate to conduct in person voting at advance polls (two days) and ordinary polls on polling day (one day).

Critical to Elections Yukon's ability to administer a safe election during the current pandemic is this 'COVID-19' Safe Workplace Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures necessary to maintain business continuity while reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in polling places.

This safety plan is aligned with the requirement for employers to develop COVID-19 safety plans with the necessary policies to manage the workplace during the pandemic.

General

This safety plan includes work protocols that minimize the impact of a potential positive case of COVID19, and mean that if the protocols are followed the workplace does not need to be closed. These protocols ensure business continuity for the essential services provided in voting places during the administration of an election.

Elections Yukon has put a great focus on the planning for the next territorial election which will likely be in a COVID-19 pandemic or post-pandemic context. It is a major focus to ensure the administration and delivery of fair, compliant and impartial elections that are safe and accessible to all. To this end, we have consulted with public health officials, political entities, electoral management bodies, election workers, and other stakeholders in developing our policies and procedures to administer an election over a number of COVID-19 scenarios.

The COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic health environment introduces extraordinary challenges to election administrators to ensure workers, the electorate and public are safe. To this end, all are encouraged to stay informed as changing circumstances may require modifications to processes, administration and, as we have seen in other jurisdictions, potentially modify the options and timelines to vote.

Elections Yukon has developed a business continuity plan to provide the direction necessary to administer an election during various COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic scenarios. To that end, the three objectives of the Elections Yukon measures are:

- safeguarding the health of the public and election workers;
- ensuring access to electors to exercise their right to vote and be a candidate; and
- protecting the integrity of the election process and validity of the results.

Purpose

Elections Yukon's COVID-19 safety plan includes workplace policies to provide:

- a description of the minimum safety measures that must be in place in each respective voting
- how workers can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions,
- who can be at the polling place, and,
- how to address illness that arises at the polling place.

Polling Places

Polling places must be established and operate in accordance with current public health guidelines. At a minimum, this means the following measures must be in place:

- Occupancy limits must be identified by returning officers and enforced based on the ability to control risks in the workspace. Primary controls are ensuring adequate physical distancing throughout the polling place, the use of barriers, and the mandatory use of masks where physical distance is not possible.
- Staff must make an oral declaration of health to their supervisor each day based on symptoms criteria set by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- Staff members who have symptoms of COVID-19, who have tested positive for COVID-19, who have had recent close contacts with a COVID-19 positive person, or who have returned from travel outside of Canada within 14 days must not attend the workplace.
- Appropriate signage (supplied by Elections Yukon) must be placed at the entryway informing staff and visitors of the occupancy load and that entry is prohibited if a person is showing symptoms of COVID-19. Additional signage should be placed as necessary in common work areas.
- Physical distancing of 2-metres/6-feet between individuals in the polling place is required and must be marked out in the polling place and in queuing areas outside.
- Election officials are required to wear masks.
- Hand sanitizer is available for use by voters and election officials. Voters will be asked to sanitize their hands upon entry and exit, and election officials will sanitize their hands regularly throughout the workday.

Risk Identification

Risks for the transmission of COVID-19 in polling places include the following:

- Direct transmission via respiratory droplets in the air between:
 - voters standing in line
 - voters and the election officials who are serving them
 - election officials working at the same station as each other
 - scrutineers and election officials at the same station
- Indirect transmission via respiratory droplets that have landed on high touch points, including:
 - door handles

- ballots and other election materials passed between voters and election officials
- ballot marking pens or pencils and voting booth surfaces where voters mark ballots
- touch fixtures and horizontal surfaces in washrooms

Risk Mitigation Protocols

The risk mitigation protocols set out below either modify procedures to eliminate the risk scenarios, or mitigate the risk of transmission through a hierarchy of protections.

- This safety plan uses the hierarchy of protections. This hierarchy prioritizes a first level of contact elimination/physical distancing, followed by engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment, as a means of identifying which adaptations are necessary for reducing COVID-19 transmission hazards. Cleaning and hygiene practices to reduce transmission risk are also set out.

First-level protection (elimination/substitution):

- Polling places perform functions that require staff to be present in the polling place and that the polling place be open to the public. Voting is a constitutional right; polling places provide access to electors to exercise that right. As such, limiting access is not an objective; controlling access can be managed through capacity limits, requirement to line up outside polling places, availability of appointments for offices, and alternate voting options such as special ballots.
- Elections Yukon's first-level protections for voting places focus on reducing the number of individuals in a polling place at any given time by providing more opportunities to vote, and by streamlining processes.
- First-level protections include measures to facilitate physical distancing in the voting place. Elections Yukon's first-level protections are as follows:

Measures include:

- Limit the number of people at the workplace and ensure physical distance wherever possible
- Capacity for mail-in voting has been increased, and a public information campaign to inform voters of this option will be used.
- Advance Poll voting opportunities are available to reduce in-person voting on polling day
- Polling places election criteria prioritizes locations with high occupancy limits, to maximize the amount of space within a voting place. High-ceilings (i.e., large volumes) are also prioritized. Use of schools and public building is encouraged.
- The number of candidate representatives that may be present is limited based on space availability.
- Physical distancing markings are set out on the polling place floor using tape and decals, and
- Additional poll attendants have been hired to assist with enforcing physical distancing.

Second-level protection (engineering controls): Barriers and partitions

Measures include:

- After prioritizing physical space, polling place selection criteria prioritize locations with HVAC systems that maximize fresh air intake/exhaust of inside air. Sites with doors and windows that can be opened to ventilate the voting space are also prioritized.

- Transparent barriers are available to be placed on the top of voting station tables. The barriers are self-standing and designed to separate the breathing zones of a standing voter and sitting election official.
- Election officials will hand ballots, other documents and single-use pencils to voters through a pass-through gap in the bottom of the barrier.

Third level protection (administrative controls): Rules and guidelines

Rules are in place to prevent infected individuals from entering the polling place, and to reduce the contact intensity of interactions within the polling place.

Measures include:

- Staff must make an oral declaration of health to their supervisor each day based on symptom criteria set by the Yukon CMOH.
- Staff and voters experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, who have tested positive for COVID-19, who have had recent close contacts with a COVID-19 positive person, or who have returned from travel outside of Canada within 14 days are not permitted to enter the voting place. Other voting arrangements will be available to these individuals.
- Signage will be in place reminding voters of occupancy limits, distancing requirements, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene requirements.
- Voters no longer need to sign a declaration in the voting book. They may now make the declaration orally.
- Voters are invited to use their own pen or pencil to mark their ballot. Single-use pencils or sanitized after use pencils are available as needed.
- Voters are no longer asked to return their ballot to the election official for counterfoil removal for advance and general voting. Voters will be asked to remove and discard the ballot counterfoil themselves, after the election official has visually confirmed that the ballot is the same one issued to the voter.
- Election officials at absentee voting are still required to handle the ballot and counterfoil after it is handled by the voter and will therefore sanitize their hands more frequently.
- Washrooms will be reserved for election official use; alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available for voters.
- Shared dishes and utensils must not be used. Staff will be required to bring their own drink containers, dishes and utensils.

Fourth-level protection: Personal protective equipment

Measures include:

- Election officials are required to wear masks while working in the polling place.
- Elections officials must wear masks during in-person training.
- Candidate representative must wear masks while observing the conduct of voting in polling places.
- Voters will be encouraged to wear their own masks when they come to vote and will not be permitted to remove their masks while voting.

- Disposable masks are made available for voters to use in the voting place.
- Gloves will be available in the polling place for election officials who choose to use them for certain tasks (e.g. counting ballots, sanitization routines).

Cleaning and hygiene practices:

Cleaning and hygiene practices are as follows:

- Offices and polling place surfaces are cleaned before it opens to the public.
- Election officials are instructed to sanitize their hands regularly throughout the day. Sanitizing instructions are included in training materials.
- Election officials are instructed to clean high touch points regularly throughout the day. Cleaning guidelines are included in training materials. It includes surface cleaning, surface disinfection and restocking of sanitization supplies.
- Election officials are responsible for regularly sanitizing their own station
- In the returning office, the returning officer will ensure common areas and high touch areas are regularly sanitized. Election officials will be responsible for their own areas.
- At the polls, poll supervisors are required to conduct regular rounds to ensure cleaning and hygiene. At the polls, deputy returning officers and poll clerks are also responsible for sanitizing the voting area behind the screen after each elector
- At the polls, the additional poll attendants hired at each polling place will assist with cleaning routines in addition to their elector support role. Poll attendants will be responsible for regularly sanitizing high touch and common areas.
- At the polls, scrutineers will be asked to regularly sanitize their hands, wear a mask and observe physical distancing protocols.
- Hand sanitizer pump bottles are available at the polling place entrance and exit, and at voting stations. Voters will be asked to sanitize their hands upon entering and before leaving.
- Single-use pencils are collected as voters leave the voting station. These can be sanitized before reuse (if reuse is necessary).
- Polling place surfaces are cleaned after voting and counting have concluded.

Training Plan

- Election official training includes COVID-19 information as background, context and a 'big picture' look at an election event. This includes the three objectives of the COVID-19 due diligence and contingency measures.
- Guidance and contact information is provided on the responses required for various scenarios of COVID-19 contact or potential contact of staff and visitors.
- Specific key protective measures are stressed, including;
 - Reporting symptoms check daily
 - Cough and Sneeze Etiquette

- Hand washing
- Mask wearing
- Physical distancing
- Staying home when sick
- Responsibility of all to follow safe working conditions and to report any areas where physical distancing protocols are not effective to their supervisor.
- Overview of cleaning and hygiene requirements for polling places
- Site-specific walk-through by senior officials throughout the day at offices and polling places including
 - Entrances, exits, hallways, pathways
 - Hazards
 - COVID-specific protocols for common areas (e.g. elevators, washrooms, stairwells, etc.)