

Seafood Safety and COVID-19

The BC Seafood Inspection Program (SIP) recognizes the important role that licensed operators and their establishments play in helping to maintain food supply during the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone in BC shares in the collective responsibility to [reduce COVID-19 transmission](#) and that means following the [orders](#) and [province-wide restrictions](#) issued by the Provincial Health Officer to protect public health. As orders and restrictions change, please review your current practices which *may* require implementing operational changes, such as:

- Ensuring all of your employees are aware of [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and [self-isolation protocols](#).
- Maintaining [physical distancing](#) of 2 meters between employees (and visitors if applicable) to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Wearing [masks](#) in all indoor public spaces of your facility regardless of vaccination status.

According to the [WHO](#) and [PHAC](#), there is currently no evidence to suggest that food, or food packaging, is a likely source or route of transmission of COVID-19. However, it is important that you are aware of your responsibilities under the [Fish and Seafood Act](#) that may potentially help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19:

- [Duty to comply with cleaning and sanitation requirements](#)
To ensure this:
 - Review and enhance, if required, your sanitation plan.
 - All handwashing stations must be equipped with hot and cold running water, a soap dispenser and a method of hand drying that uses single service product. Please note that the use of hand sanitizer is *not* a substitute for handwashing.
 - Review and increase, if required, the frequency of cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces and non-food contact surfaces (e.g., door handles, light switches).

- [Duty to comply with personal hygiene requirements](#)

To ensure this:

- Review and enhance, if required, hygiene training with your employees.
- Ensure that all employees are washing hands frequently and properly for at least 20 seconds.
- Ensure that employees are not coughing or sneezing into food products or food packaging.

While industry is ultimately responsible for ensuring the safety of their food products at all times, the SIP will continue to support operators in their efforts to comply with relevant legislation, including the [Fish and Seafood Act](#) and the [Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulation](#).

Please visit the Ministry's [COVID-19 website](#) to stay current.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact Stella Lukman, Food Safety and Quality Specialist by email at Stella.Lukman@gov.bc.ca or by phone at 778-866-5287.