

---

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
2020EMBC0014-000560  
March 25, 2020

COVID-19 Joint Information Centre  
Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

### **Guidance to mining and smelting operations during COVID-19**

VICTORIA – As challenges caused by novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to shift, the B.C. government and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer (PHO), are taking unprecedented measures to slow transmission.

On March 16, 2020, Henry issued an order under the Public Health Act prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people.

On March 18, 2020, the chief inspector of mines (CIM) communicated to all major mines, sand and gravel, and placer operations in B.C. with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further to the guidance provided by the CIM that all mines must follow the public health order, the PHO is directing all mines and smelters to take additional precautions to minimize the risks of COVID-19 transmission and illness to their employees.

While mine sites are not considered to be gatherings of more than 50 people, the PHO has provided the following directions for day-to-day production and site operations:

- Reduce the number of on-site personnel by encouraging work from home where feasible.
- Daily pre-shift safety meetings (toolbox meetings) affecting more than 50 people are to be held in smaller numbers or via other media, such as by phone or video conferencing.
- In-person town-hall meetings used to address the whole site must be avoided for groups of more than 50 people. Communication should continue in smaller groups or via other means.
- There should be no more than 50 people in the same space in any circumstance. This includes common areas in bunkhouses and cafeterias.
- Where possible, employees should maintain a distance of two metres from each other. This distancing is as important outside of work hours as it is during work hours.
- Post signage that limits the number of occupants in any elevator to four people at a time.
- Reduce in-person meetings and gatherings. Where feasible, hold site meetings in open spaces or outside.
- Increase the number of handwashing stations. Post signage that identifies their location.
- Maintain a list of employees who are currently working on site. Update this list daily.
- All common areas and surfaces are to be cleaned as needed, and at the end of each shift. Examples include washrooms, shared offices, common tables, desks, light switches and door handles.
- Anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms, such as a sore throat, fever, sneezing or coughing, must self-isolate at home for a minimum of **10 days** from onset of symptoms, until their symptoms are completely resolved.
- Anyone who has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate at home for 14 days.

- Visitors must be essential to the mine site's operation.

These requirements also pertain to transportation to and from mines. All employees are reminded to follow direction of the PHO regarding physical distancing when off site.

Employers should reassess their work environment every day and keep up to date with the information posted on the Province's COVID-19 website: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19)

The B.C. government is doing everything it can to help contain the spread of COVID-19. The safety of British Columbians remains its top priority.

**Learn More:**

For more information on the COVID-19 response, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19)

**Contacts:**

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum  
Resources  
Media Relations  
250 952-0628

COVID-19 Joint Information Centre  
Media Relations  
[embc.covid19jic@gov.bc.ca](mailto:embc.covid19jic@gov.bc.ca)  
236 478-1336

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)