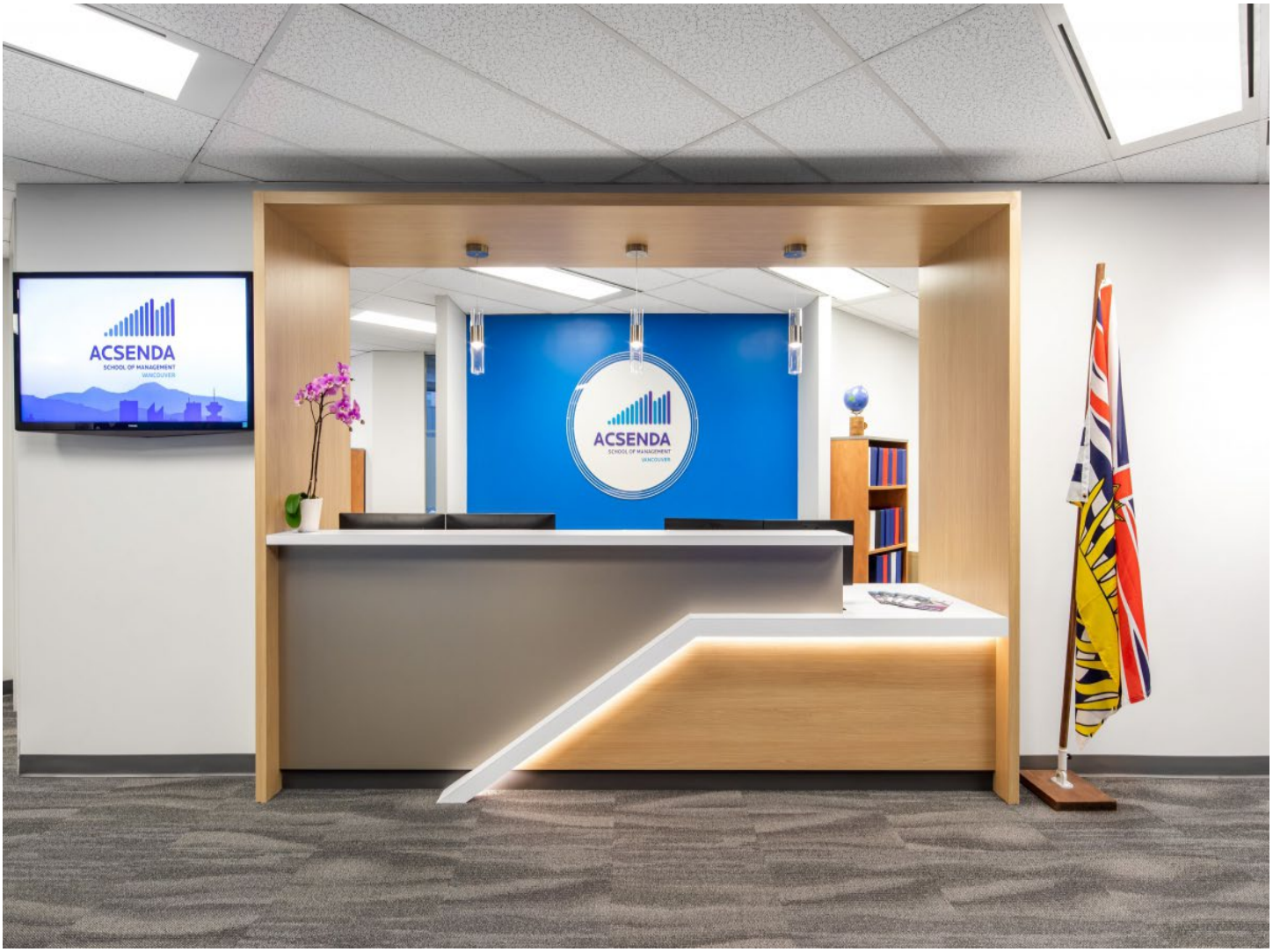

Acsenda School of Management

Communicable Disease Plan

Updated Aug 19, 2024

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Introduction

The team at ASM has spent the past 24 months navigating campus operations and academic delivery in the ever-changing COVID-19 world. Now, as we move towards a more positive outlook regarding the containment of the pandemic, we see the return to the delivery of classes in person and on campus throughout the province. Following the Provincial Health Officer's recommendations, we also now see a shift from a focus just on COVID-19 to communicable diseases in general.

Communicable diseases are defined as an illness that is caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted from one person to another. This includes but is not limited to COVID-19 and its variants, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

According to the Public Health Officer:

- Educational settings are low-risk settings for COVID-19 transmission, particularly in the context of a highly immunized population.
- Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 on campus. Everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is now managed like other respiratory illnesses.
- Given the low-risk nature of in-class learning, a highly immunized population, and significant social benefits of in-person instruction, on-campus instruction is strongly recommended.

We want to provide reassurance and guidance to our Students, Staff, and Faculty in the following plan. ASM was able to quickly move operations online to ensure business and study continuity. This agility will be the key to our continued operations with the senior leadership team drawing guidance from WorkSafe BC, the Provincial Health Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health. This plan outlines the assessments, precautions, education and training, procedures and actions that ASM will take to reduce risk, inform its constituents and act upon incidents.

ASM is a leader in academics and in workplace wellbeing and places an emphasis on the safety of students, employees, and the community as a whole. Any individual returning to campus will be trained on new operational procedures and ASM has committed to maintaining a "zero tolerance for illness" policy. The ASM team has developed and implemented a series of new policies and procedures to ensure classrooms, offices, and common areas are safe and operating within the guidelines of public health and WorkSafe BC.

The ASM Communicable Disease Plan is based on 6 key areas:

Prevention and Controlling Risk	Education and Information	Respect, Confidentiality and Well Being
Monitoring	Communication	Response

For further questions regarding this report please contact Neil Mort, President at neil.mort@acsenda.com.

Roles and Responsibilities

ASM Leadership & Management are responsible for:
• Ensuring the Plan is implemented in all programs /facilities under their authority.
• Addressing non-compliance with the Plan within their areas of responsibility, if necessary.

Occupational Health & Safety Committee & Risk Services is responsible for:
• Monitoring and updating the Communicable Disease Plan as per regional and provincial orders, guidance, notices, and recommendations.
• Providing information and advice to individuals and departments on the implementation of the Plan.
• As necessary, follow up with programs/service units in the event of reported noncompliance.
• Develop safety training and maintain records for the ASM community.

Directors are responsible for:
• Advising employees of the Plan and the precautions they need to take to protect against exposure to infectious agents.
• Ensuring their employees have successfully completed training that is required.
• Monitoring the workplace to ensure their employees and students follow the procedures set out in the Plan.

Students, Faculty and Staff
All students, faculty and staff have the following responsibilities:
• Understand the Plan and follow the procedures outlined in the Plan to protect against exposure to infectious agents.
• Participate in education and training sessions.
• Use any required personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed.
• Report health and safety concerns to their supervisors/instructors.

1 Routes of Transmission

The primary routes of exposure to infectious agents are through touch, droplet and airborne transmission.

Contact Transmission

Direct contact involves skin-to-skin or other direct form of physical contact with infected persons. Indirect contact involves passive transfer of microorganisms via an intermediate object such as contaminated instruments, door handles, etc.

Droplet Transmission

Large droplets can be generated by infected persons during coughing, sneezing, or during certain medical procedures. These droplets can travel short distances (approx. 2 meters or less) through the air and can infect other persons by coming into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth.

Airborne Transmission

Small airborne particles can be generated by infected persons during coughing, sneezing, or during certain medical procedures. These smaller particles can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time and are widely dispersed by air currents.

2 Activities that may Result in Exposure

Common day-to-day activities, such as shaking hands, touching common surfaces (e.g., door knobs) and sharing workstations, computer keyboards, phones, staplers, food items and utensils can result in exposure to infectious agents. Direct contact with infected individuals will also increase the risk of infection.

Specific work activities that may result in exposure will vary between departments and service units but higher risk activities include the administration of first aid and other medical services to sick individuals; cleaning up sewage leaks, vomit or blood, and handling of waste that is contaminated with infectious agents.

3 Monitoring Risk

The local and or regional level of risk for certain infectious agents may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. The Chief Safety Officer and Director of Health and Counseling Services (HCS) will monitor the progression of all communicable disease outbreaks that have the potential to impact ASM students, faculty, staff and visitors. The Director of HCS will communicate with the provincial Health Authorities, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the provincial Ministry of Health on a regular basis to monitor the spread and impact of the outbreak.

4 Exposure Control Measures

A combination of exposure control measures will be taken to reduce the spread of communicable disease and the risk of exposure to infectious agents. Exposure control measures include the implementation of core public health measures, engineering and administrative controls, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Standard Core Public Health Measures

Core public health measures to prevent communicable diseases include encouraging and supporting vaccination, frequent and proper hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and staying home from work/school when sick.

Encouraging and Supporting Vaccinations

Authorized vaccines are highly effective at reducing serious outcomes from communicable diseases. ASM strongly encourages everyone to get fully vaccinated as they are able.

WorkSafeBC requires that vaccination against Hepatitis B and other biological agents listed in the Communicable Disease Control Immunization Program Manual issued by the BC Centre for Disease Control, must be offered to all employees who are at risk of occupational exposure to that infectious agent. The cost of the vaccine will be covered for employees.

Vaccines are not currently available for Hepatitis C, HIV, noroviruses or pandemic influenza. All members of the ASM community are encouraged to get the annual flu vaccine.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of exposure to infectious agents. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious agents from the hands to the eyes, mouth, nose and to common surfaces. Refer to the WorksafeBC handwashing guide in appendix A.

Soap and warm running water should be used and hands should be washed for 20-30 seconds. If water is unavailable, hand sanitizers can be used but only if the hands are not visibly soiled. Hands should be dried with a single-use towel and the faucet turned off without re-contaminating the hands.

Hands should be washed:

- Before leaving a work area.
- After handling materials that may be contaminated with infectious agents.
- Before and after direct contact with a sick individual.
- After removing gloves and other PPE.
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses or applying makeup.

Signage is posted in washrooms on campus to remind community members of the proper handwashing technique.

Cough and Sneeze Etiquette

All students, faculty, staff and visitors at ASM are expected to follow the cough/sneeze etiquette, which includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of them promptly in the garbage.
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands regularly.
- Use a mask if needed.

Staying Home When Sick

ASM will support students, faculty and staff who have symptoms consistent with a communicable disease. Students, faculty and staff should not remain, or be permitted to remain, on campus if they are experiencing symptoms of a communicable disease; or are advised to self-isolate or quarantine by public health.

Faculty and staff should continue to report illness as they usually do. Absences should be reported to supervisors in accordance with normal sick leave protocol. Students should report illness to their instructors and request a modification or accommodation if needed.

ASM will follow established accommodation mechanisms to ensure that students who cannot physically be on campus (e.g., they are ill, adhering to quarantine rules, self-isolating, attending a vaccine appointment, etc.) are not disadvantaged in their educational pursuits.

Employees are provided with 5 paid sick days in accordance with the Employment Standards Act.

Engineering Controls

Engineering controls separate or isolate an individual from a hazard and include plexiglass barriers and building ventilation.

Barriers

Physical barriers separate people and help to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets. In the event of an outbreak, Public Health may suggest that physical barriers be used as a hazard control when there is frequent contact with others (e.g., co-workers, students). Examples of when physical barriers may be used in the workplace include reception desks, and office areas to separate workstations.

HVAC Systems

ASM buildings are operating and maintained in accordance with WorkSafeBC requirements in sections 4.70 through 4.80 and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Standards. Buildings are supplied with outside air through mechanical means or natural ventilation. The systems are maintained to provide ventilation and thermal comfort as designed, through the following activities:

- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are set to maintain appropriate air flow and temperatures, as designed.
- Air filters are equipped in most buildings with mechanical heating, cooling

and ventilation systems.

- Exhaust fans in restrooms are operating continuously in most cases.
- Where possible ASM has reduced recirculated air and increased ventilation as recommended by accredited bodies such as ASHRAE.

HVAC concerns should be reported to our ASM Facilities& Admin Manager .

Administrative Controls

Administrative controls include the implementation of work procedures to reduce the risk of infectious agent exposure, such as routine cleaning practices. During times of elevated risk, additional controls may be introduced, such as physical distancing and additional cleaning of high touch surfaces.

Physical Distancing and Limiting Close Interactions

In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, Public Health may direct physical distancing implementations to reduce the risk of exposure to infectious agents. If ASM receives such direction from Public Health, arrangements should be made for employees to work at home and large gatherings should be avoided wherever possible.

Physical distancing involves keeping a distance of at least 2 meters from another individual whether or not they are exhibiting any symptoms.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

ASM will maintain a clean environment through routine cleaning processes. During flu season and in the event of a communicable disease outbreak, a high touch point cleaning/disinfection protocol will be implemented which involves the cleaning/disinfection of high touch point surfaces in common areas, including elevator panels and buttons, washroom partitions, taps, flush handles, door handles and push bars, garbage lids, and blue phones. The janitorial staff will also ensure that all washrooms are equipped with soap and paper towels and hand sanitizer dispensers are replenished.

Spaces including counter services, waiting rooms, shared equipment (keyboards, coffee machines, etc.), offices, workstations and labs and dining areas, are not included in the high touch point initiative. It is the responsibility of department personnel to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces in their spaces and to maintain a supply of disinfecting products. Consistent with guidance provided by the BC CDC, general cleaning and disinfection of common surfaces that people touch (e.g., countertops) should occur regularly.

Requests for cleaning and refilling of hand soap or sanitizer stations should be directed to the Facilities & Admin Manager via telephone at 604.430.5111 ext 141 or e-mail going to room 211.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is equipment worn by workers to minimize exposure to specific hazards. Examples of PPE include respirators, gloves, and eye and face protection. PPE is generally considered the last line of defense against hazards in the workplace. PPE does not reduce the hazard itself nor does it guarantee permanent or

total protection.

Other than the PPE normally worn by employees (e.g., gloves and safety glasses worn in labs), additional equipment is not recommended to protect against communicable diseases in most situations.

Non-Medical Masks

The use of non-medical masks can help in containing your own droplets and protecting others. In some circumstances, depending on local transmission rates, non-medical masks may be recommended by public health as a prevention strategy.

Gloves

Gloves are generally not recommended for most ASM employees to protect against infectious agents. Other measures, such as good hand hygiene practices, are more effective in preventing the risk of infectious agent transmission. Gloves should continue to be worn by health care and first aid providers and by researchers handling hazardous materials in the lab. Gloves are also recommended when cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects or surfaces.

When required, gloves should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and good hygiene practices. This includes:

- Choosing the proper gloves for the chemicals or other materials you are handling.
- Proper donning and doffing gloves to minimize contamination. If you are wearing a mask, put your gloves on last, and take them off first when you are finished. Wash your hands before and after wearing gloves.
- Changing gloves after there is a tear, damage, or puncture.
- Not using hand sanitizer on gloves.

5 Additional Measures — As Recommended by Public Health

If necessary, ASM will implement additional prevention measures as required by a medical health officer or the provincial health officer to deal with communicable diseases in our region or on our campuses.

6 Education and Training

All new employees are required to complete the ASM Onboarding and orientation. Supervisors should confirm completion of the training with their employees.

Posters outlining the standard precautions that can be taken to protect against infectious agents will be posted across campus. In addition, regular updates will be provided on the ASM webpage, ASM social media, and via email and newsletters.

A record of all training, education and fit testing provided to faculty, staff and students will be maintained in the Human Resources office.

7 Reporting

Employees should report safety concerns and hazards to their supervisors. If not addressed, concerns can be escalated to the local occupational health safety (OHS) committee. All health & safety incidents, including accidents and near-misses, must be reported to OHS through the ASM Incident Report form.

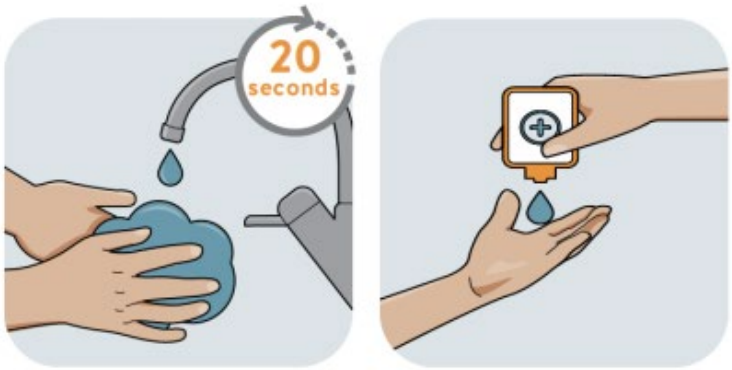
For urgent security matters or urgent first aid, please call Campus Safety and Security at 604.682.1954.

Resources:

- *Guidance and recommendations from the Provincial Health Officer are available online at the COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information website.*
- *WorkSafeBC guidance is available on communicable disease prevention plans.*

Appendix A – Proper Handwashing Guide

Prevent the spread of communicable disease



Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Wash your hands:

- When you arrive at work
- Before and after going on a break
- After using the washroom
- After handling cash or other materials that have come into contact with the public
- Before and after handling shared tools and equipment
- Before and after using masks or other personal protective equipment

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