

6951 Westminster Highway, Richmond, BC  
 Mailing Address: PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal, Vancouver BC, V6B 5L5  
 Telephone 604 276-3100 Toll Free 1-888-621-7233 Fax 604 276-3247

The *Workers Compensation Act* requires that the employer must post a copy of this report in a conspicuous place at or near the workplace inspected for at least seven days, or until compliance has been achieved, whichever is the longer period. A copy of this report must also be given to the joint committee or worker health and safety representative, as applicable.

A revised version of the *Workers Compensation Act* took effect on April 6, 2020. The B.C. government's revisions aim to make the Act easier to read and understand, and to reorganize the numbering to make laws easier to find. The revisions make no changes to B.C.'s laws concerning workers' compensation, occupational health and safety, and employers' assessment premiums. Please be aware there may be a transitional period where correspondence from WorkSafeBC may include references to either the previous Act or the revised Act. For more information, visit [www.worksafebc.com/WCA2019](http://www.worksafebc.com/WCA2019) or call the Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100, or toll free within BC at 1.888.621.7233 (SAFE).

### Inspection Report #202017748028A

Employer Name	Jobsite Inspected	Scope of Inspection
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA	Student Housing and Community Services 2205 Lower Mall Greater Vancouver A BC V6T 1Z4	Employer Response to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Date of Initiating Inspection	Date of This Inspection	Delivery Date of This Report	Delivery Method
Apr 23, 2020	Apr 23, 2020	Apr 24, 2020	Email

**THERE ARE ZERO (0) ORDERS OR OTHER ITEMS OUTSTANDING**

**ACTION MAY STILL BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE  
PLEASE READ FULL REPORT**

## **INSPECTION NOTES**

On Thursday April 23, 2020, prevention officer Jonathan Truefitt conducted a telephone call with this employer pertaining to matters of compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (the Regulation) and the Workers Compensation Act (the Act). The scope of the telephone call was to discuss this employer's response to the current Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in B.C. in regards to worker health and safety at this workplace.

### **A) BACKGROUND**

This workplace is a post secondary institution. The focus area of this telephone call inspection was the student housing and community services department and in particular workers who work within the student housing buildings for front desk services.

### **B) COVID-19 EMPLOYER RESPONSE**

The employer provided the following information in regards to steps being taken at this workplace to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus for the health and safety of workers. The information was provided during the telephone call on Thursday April 23, 2020 The information has been divided into sub-categories.

#### **Information, education, and reporting of unsafe conditions relating to COVID-19:**

Information about COVID-19, including updates, is provided to workers through the employer's website and online portal that contains the Front Desk Procedure guide. Signs regarding COVID-19 are also posted in multiple locations. Workers are able to report concerns relating to COVID-19 to the employer through their supervisor, and to representatives of the joint health and safety committee.

#### **Identifying exposure hazards and developing measures to control exposure:**

The employer reported that risk assessments of areas and work tasks that may present an increased risk to workers of exposure to COVID-19 have been completed.

The employer reported that students are currently residing in the housing buildings and therefore the front desks of the housing buildings must remain open. Controls have been put in place to protect workers while the desks are open. These include implementing physical distancing at the desks through floor markers, designated walk areas when approaching the front desk, the placing of additional temporary desks in front of the main desk counter to limit the distance to which others can approach, and limiting the number of workers behind the front desk.

A procedure has also been implemented for package drop activities that allows workers and others to keep a safe distance by placing packages on a cart away from the desk and not requiring a signature for receipt from the delivery company. In some locations packages for pick up by students can be kept in a locked box to avoid person to person interactions.

Face shields and gloves are also provided to the workers for use. The employer has also considered adding a screen to the front desk areas however the employer's assessment determined that other controls may be more effective as the screen would require moving from time to time and would also require cleaning. The employer determined that physical distancing by having workers not have to interact with others at close range was more effective than interactions at the desk with a screen in place. The employer reported that the issue of having screens at the front desks will be further discussed with the joint health and safety committee at their next meeting.

Additional sanitizing of work areas is being conducted by cleaning staff and cleaning materials have also been provided to workers at the front desk should they wish to perform any additional sanitizing themselves at their desk locations. Hand sanitizer is available for workers at the front desks and hand washing facilities are also available at the workplace. Increased hand washing is being encouraged by the employer.

#### **Controlling the number of people on site:**

A lower number of students are currently residing in student housing (~5000). The number of workers in the desk areas has also been reduced and work tasks such as resident wellness checks are now being conducted by security staff to limit desk workers to the number of interactions with other people.

**Prohibition of workers who are sick and those returning from outside Canada:**

The employer has developed guidance for all of their departments regarding workers who may be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. This includes advising workers who are exhibiting symptoms or are not feeling well to stay home and contact HealthlinkBC at 811 for advice and follow-up. Workers who have returned from travel outside of Canada are advised to follow the provincial and federal requirements to self-isolate for 14 days.

**Considerations for the employer:**

In regards to the placing of screens at the front desk, the employer may want to consider the guidance document for hotels and COVID-19 available from the Provincial Health Officer website that includes information on when screens may be appropriate as a control for preventing exposure to COVID-19. The document is available here:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-hotel-sector.pdf?bcgovtm=20200319\\_GCPE\\_AM\\_COVID\\_4\\_NOTIFICATION\\_BCGOV\\_BCGOV\\_EN\\_BC\\_\\_NOTIFICATION](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-hotel-sector.pdf?bcgovtm=20200319_GCPE_AM_COVID_4_NOTIFICATION_BCGOV_BCGOV_EN_BC__NOTIFICATION)

**C) COVID-19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze or when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth. Common symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, and sneezing and may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19.

The purpose of this inspection is to review this employer's response to the current COVID-19 pandemic in relation to worker health and safety at this workplace.

Measures for COVID-19 are in flux and as such guidance from public health officials may change on a daily if not hourly basis. Employers will need to readily adopt proactive risk management strategies to minimize the potential for contracting COVID-19 in the workplace.

Following the recommendations of the BC Provincial Health Officer, employers should consider the following when establishing policies and procedures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, and to ensure these are communicated and understood by their workers:

**1. Plan work to allow for physical distancing (workers spaced at least 2 metres apart)**

- If practicable, arrange the workplace to maintain appropriate distance between workers. Where there is not sufficient distance, physical barriers may be used, such as doors, cubicle walls or plexiglass screens/enclosures.
- Actively promote physical distancing.
- Where possible avoid non-essential face to face interactions. Use phones, video conferencing, or other technologies to reduce personal contact.

**2. Provide sufficient soap and water or hand sanitizers and post the locations to encourage workers to wash their hands frequently.**

- Actively promote handwashing and respiratory hygiene.
- OHSR 4.85 Washroom facilities outlines regulatory requirements.

**3. Enhance cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace, particularly high contact items such as handrails, doorknobs,**

**shared tools or equipment and washroom facilities.** It is not known how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on surfaces, however there is some evidence that it can live on certain objects for a few hours to days.

- Provide necessary cleaning products and items to maintain a clean and safe workplace.
- Create cleaning protocols and procedures and increase frequency for cleaning activities.
- Ensure contaminated cleaning items are disposed of responsibly.

**4. Workers who are displaying symptoms must go home and self-isolate.** Note, returning travellers from anywhere outside of Canada (including the US) must follow current quarantine and public health law requirements upon returning to Canada.

- Communicate COVID-19 signs and symptoms to workers.
- Workers who test positive for COVID-19 are to self-isolate and follow current public health authority instructions.

**It is to be noted that:**

- Workers are to use personal protective equipment as required by the OHSR.
- Workers in B.C. have the right to refuse unsafe work if they believe it presents an undue hazard. WorkSafeBC Guideline - G3.12 "Refusal of unsafe work" provides information about work refusals, including a flowchart illustrating the right to refuse process. Employers must immediately investigate reports of unsafe work and ensure that any necessary corrective action is taken without delay.
- Mental health is just as important as physical health and to take measures to support mental well-being. Workers in the workplace may also be affected by the anxiety and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 situation. See Available Resources.

**Available COVID-19 Resources:**

- WorkSafeBC: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates>
- BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- HealthLink BC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/>
- Government of BC Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety & Depression:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/managing-covid-stress>

**D) CONTACT**

If there are any questions regarding the items noted in this inspection report, please contact:

Jonathan Truefitt, B.Sc., CIH, ROH - Occupational Hygiene Officer - WorkSafeBC

E-mail: [jonathan.truefitt@worksafebc.com](mailto:jonathan.truefitt@worksafebc.com)

Mail: P.O. Box 5350 Stn. Terminal, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5L5

Phone: 604.244.6486 Fax: 604.232.1558

For more information on occupational health and safety, visit: [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com)

## REFERENCES

**In addition to any orders, or other items, and the information provided in the Inspection Notes section in this Inspection Report, the officer may discuss other health and safety issues with the employer arising out of the inspection. The information below sets out the health and safety requirements discussed with the employer, and unless otherwise noted, violations of these requirements were not observed.**

Reference	Details Discussed
<b>WCA21(1)(a)</b> Every employer must ensure the health and safety of all workers working for that employer, and any other workers present at a workplace at which that employer's work is being carried out.	A discussion was held with this employer by telephone regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring the health and safety of workers.
<b>OHS4.85(1)</b> Except as provided by subsection (2), the employer must ensure that a sufficient number of plumbed washroom facilities are readily available for workers.	Reference for Employer.
<b>OHS3.12(1)</b> A person must not carry out or cause to be carried out any work process or operate or cause to be operated any tool, appliance or equipment if that person has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person.	Reference for Employer.
<b>OHS3.12(2)</b> A worker who refuses to carry out a work process or operate a tool, appliance or equipment pursuant to Subsection 3.12(1) must immediately report the circumstances of the unsafe condition to his or her supervisor or employer.	Reference for Employer.
<b>OHS3.12(3)</b> A supervisor or employer receiving a report made under Subsection 3.12(2) must immediately investigate the matter.	Reference for Employer.

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Employer #	Mailing Address	Classification Unit #	Operating Location
11284	C/O WCB CLAIMS ADMINISTRATOR HUMAN RESOURCES 6TH FLOOR 6190 AGRONOMY RD VANCOUVER BC V6T 1Z3	765010	001

Lab Samples Taken	Direct Readings	Results Presented	Sampling Inspection(s)
N	N	N	

Workers onsite during Inspection	Notice of Project Number

Inspection Report Delivered To	Employer Representative Present During Inspection	Worker Representative Present During Inspection	Labour Organizations & Local
Gontran Paget	Gontran Paget	Lee McArthur	BCGEU CUPE Locals 2950, 116 AAPS

WorkSafeBC Officer Conducting Inspection
Jonathan Truefitt

*Inspection Time	*Travel Time
4.00 hrs	0.00 hrs

\*The time recorded above reflects the inspection time and travel time associated with this inspection report and includes time spent on pre and post-inspection activities. Additional time may be added for subsequent activity.

### Request a Review

**Any employer, worker, owner, supplier, union, or a member of a deceased worker's family directly affected may, within 45 calendar days of the delivery date of this report, in writing, request the Review Division of WorkSafeBC to conduct a review of an order, or the non-issuance of an order, by contacting the Review Division. Employers requiring assistance may contact the Employers' Advisers Office at 1-800-925-2233.**

**To submit a request online, visit <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/review-appeal/submit-request>**

**WorkSafeBC values your feedback. To obtain that feedback, an external market research provider may be contacting you to complete a survey.**