

PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

March 30th, 2020, 2:30pm to 4:30pm Zoom Virtual Conferencing Meeting Notes

More than ever, people with disabilities need to come together as a unified group in society. How we support and help each other through crisis will strengthen us as a community and as individuals. We were very gratified that over 109 people joined the March 30th, 2020 virtual Zoom meeting to discuss the latest news and to contribute valuable information and recommendations to the rest of the group.

We have all made a choice to live independently and this comes with additional challenges, but through unification people with disabilities can make a difference; each voice is important.

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Paul Gauthier, Executive Director for the Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) Society, teamed with Ruth Marzetti, Executive Director at the Technology for Living, and developed an exciting peer discussion group to meet regularly to discuss topics of concern and interest brought forward by group members, as well as explore common interests and ways to support each other.

The Association of CSIL Employers (ACE) is composed of people with disabilities who are currently enrolled in the Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL) program in British Columbia. The purpose of ACE is to be a collective, or common voice, around issues affecting the CSIL Employer. There are over 1100 CSIL employers throughout the province. Under the ACE banner, we are able to share information, resources and peer support which ultimately strengthens the collective. For more information, email ace@ifrcsociety.org The ACE Executive committee consists of Tim Louis, Ken Kramer and Paul Gauthier.

Please ensure you review all the uploads on the site as they include valuable information, much of which was contributed by the meeting participants.

Confidentiality. The virtual meeting was not recorded for purposes of confidentiality so peers could speak openly about any concerns they are dealing with.

1. Association of CSIL Employers

March 28th 2020 email request to the Ministry of Health in follow up to the March 16, 2020 email.

A strong email was sent out by the Association of CSIL Employers Executives, requesting the Ministry of Health respond by March 30th, on the following points.

1. Clarify and communicate to the Ministry the impact and effect of orders of the provincial health officer as it relates to community care
2. Permit CSIL Employers to hire immediate family during pandemic
3. Temporarily suspend requirement of prior approval to use agencies for emergency staffing
4. Ensure sufficient care supplies available to high risk CSIL employers and staff; costs be accessible and supplemented through current or additional CSIL funds
5. Ensure CSIL employers have access to additional funding from Health Authorities for emergency employment situations where staff are unable to come into work.
6. Ensure that CSIL Employers have the ability to have their employees attend to their needs if the employer becomes hospitalized.
7. Include ACE in all decision making processes as they relate to CSIL Employers

Also included in the emailed letter:

1. Orders that workers cannot work for multiple facilities and how they impact CSIL Employers
2. Vancouver Island Health Authority demand for CSIL Employee personal information
3. The need for order interpretation consistency across the Health Authorities
4. Lack of adequate response from the Ministry of Health

2. Update: Ministry of Health Exemptions to Policies

We are happy to report that in response to our requests, a letter was issued on April 1st, 2020, by the Ministry of Health. They advised that they are relaxing some of the policies for CSIL Employers and have sent a letter to the Health Authorities for distribution to the CSIL Employers in their region.

All exceptions must be reported to the Health Authority managers for monitoring purposes. The exceptions in summary, are as follows:

1. Health Authorities will allow a time limited (3 month) exception and permit CSIL Employers to allocate surplus funding towards two weeks of pay for CSIL Employees required to self isolate.
 - a. If a CSIL Employer lacks adequate surplus to cover the payroll burden, the Health Authority may provide temporary financial relief on a case by case basis with adequate justification and supporting documentation from CSIL Employers
2. Health Authorities will temporarily (3 month) suspend the requirement to obtain prior approval to use agencies for emergency staffing.
3. The Ministry allows CSIL Employers to temporarily hire (3 months) immediate family members without the requirement to obtain prior approval, if their supply of regular staff and back up care plan staff has been impacted.
4. CSIL Employers will temporarily be permitted to expense greater than \$40 per month towards universal precautions and safety. (gloves, masks etc.)

A brief discussion occurred during the Pathways To Independence meeting about having a representative from the Ministry of Health or from the Health Authorities attend one of the meetings enabling CSIL Employers to express concerns and ask question. Some interest was expressed, and this will be looked into.

3. Accessible Canada

Spinal Cord Injury has provided a link to a document prepared by Accessible Canada which went to the Federal Government.

COVID-19 and Disability: Recommendations to the Canadian Government from Disability Related Organizations in Canada – March 24, 2020

To capture some points made in the recommendation document;

- a. It is imperative that the Government of Canada urgently address the unique vulnerabilities of people with disabilities and their families during the COVID-19 crisis.
- b. People with disabilities make up 22% of the Canadian Population
 - I. Many people are at risk
 - II. If Canada's healthcare system becomes overburdened by COVID-19, most triaging guidelines will result in people with disabilities being denied care, *triaged out* of care solely on the basis of having a disability.
 - III. This happened during SARS and H1N1 pandemics

- IV. Canadians with disabilities may be refused ventilators or life support in a moment of crisis because they have a disability
- V. This discriminatory policy is of great concern
- c. Therefore, Accessible Canada has sent the letter to the Federal Government with a list of the top seven priorities of the disability Community
- d. Link to the complete Letter: <https://www.include-me.ca/include-me/covid-19-and-disability-recommendations-canadian-government-disability-related-0>

4. COVID-19 Preparation and Preventive Measures

Individualized Funding Resource Centre Society

Due to the COVID-19 (formerly known as Coronavirus) pandemic we are urging all staff to follow the recommendations and directives set out by the BC Ministry of Health and the Provincial Government. The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) is advising Community Support Workers and Personal Care Workers **to adapt rather than suspend services** to vulnerable people.

People with disabilities and their personal care attendants are strongly urged to follow the directions from the BC Centre for Disease Control in order to work safely and to prevent transmission at home and at the workplace.

Attached to this document is BC Centre for Disease Control – Coronavirus COVID-19 Key Facts sheet for persons with chronic health conditions.

Prepare and Prevent

Continue to think ahead about the actions you can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of any illness, to people you support.

Steps to Minimize Risk

- Take the same measures as you would do to avoid influenza, colds and other illnesses
- Social distancing (having space of 2 metres, or two arm lengths, between individuals)
- Avoid crowds of more than 50 people
- Wash your hands, frequently, for 20 seconds. If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) can be used to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly soiled. If they are soiled, use a wipe and then ABHR to effectively clean them.
- To help reduce risk of infection:
 - Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough.
 - Minimum twice daily cleaning of high contact surfaces, such as doorknobs, faucet handles, computers, touch screens, light switches, television remotes, cupboard doors etc.
 - Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.

Personal Care

Personal Care Attendants are requested to make every effort to keep hands washed and to cover mouth and nose with a mask. If a mask is not available, ensure there is alternate measures to prevent spray from coughs and sneezes.

Advice on Wearing Masks

Masks should be used by sick people to prevent transmission to other people. A mask will help keep a person's droplets in. A single cough or sneeze can have up to 30,000 droplets.

However, it may be less effective to wear a mask out in the community when a person is not sick themselves. Masks may give a person a false sense of security and are likely to increase the number of times a person will touch their own face (e.g., to adjust the mask).

About COVID-19

Covid-19 can cause a range of mild to severe symptoms and it is possible that people will not recognize symptoms that are mild.

Symptoms:

- Frequently reported: fever, dry cough, tiredness (fatigue)
- Sometimes reported: sore throat, body aches, nasal congestion, runny nose, diarrhea (WHO, CDC)

For non-emergency health information and resources:

- HealthLink BC: **dial 811** to discuss your symptoms to a health care professional
- 1-888-COVID19: a dedicated telephone line for non-medical information on COVID-19
- Service BC: 1-888-268-4319, Available 7:30am-8pm

Information Links:

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website contains the latest information on the COVID-19, particularly as it relates to the health and well-being of British Columbians. Relevant BCCDC resources and channels include:

- Information for the public: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>
- HealthLink BC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/> or <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-covid-19>
- British Columbia Public Health Alerts: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/public-health-alerts>

5. COVID-19 Prepare and Prevention for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors

Compiled by Laura Mackenrot

Ms. Laura Mackenrot compiled information and resources related to COVID-19 for Preparation and Prevention and very graciously invited the IFRC and various others to contribute.

The document includes a variety of resources which people with disabilities and seniors can make use of as we all navigate our daily lives through the COVID-19 crisis.

Attached as a separate document is the presentation of her materials and she urges everyone to share it among your contacts.

6. COVID 19 Updates and Suggestions

1. As of March 26, 2020, Essential Services include **Vulnerable Population Service Providers**
 - i. Care for seniors, adults, children and individuals with disabilities
 - ii. Elder and disability care, including disabled service support – for physical and cognitive disabled persons

Peers ask if CSIL Employees can be tested for COVID-19. The information at the following link, states that not everyone with symptoms require a test. However, those people who fall within the following categories and who have respiratory symptoms will be tested.

1. a) hospitalized or likely to be hospitalized, b) Health care workers c) Residents of long term care facilities and d) Part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/lab-testing>

2. ACE Executives will send a request to the Ministry of Health and/or Provincial Health Officer to clarify that CSIL Employees are included in their Lab Testing policy for COVID-19. Whereas the policy states that, among the persons eligible for testing are Health Care Workers, which include CSIL Employees.
2. There were suggestions made about contacting the media. The peers voiced concern that it's glaringly apparent in this time of crisis, people with disabilities are not being represented in the news.

Meeting participants brainstormed methods on how to not only create a greater awareness in the community for what people with disabilities are going through during the pandemic, but also send an additional message to the government that further action is needed.

- a. **Change.org Campaign:** Publish an expose' article
- b. **Media Coverage**
 - CBC, Global, Blogs.
 - Highlight CSIL and issues

- CSIL Employers to volunteer to discuss the issues faced during the pandemic

7. Staffing and Supply Challenges

- 1) Working without masks and gloves
 - a) Lack of supplies
 - i) Gloves are not a guarantee of safety. Analyse how people are doing their job and interacting with your environment.
 - ii) It could help to do a flowchart of your daily activities, identifying where/when people should hand wash for example.
- 2) One of the biggest challenges is in the area of getting access to essential medical equipment, supplies. The ACE Executives requested the Ministry of Health to work with the CSIL program in conjunction with the Health Authorities to see if there is anyway that they could assist CSIL in getting supplies out to CSIL employers. The Ministry of Health response was that it is something that they are continuing to work on.

Since March 16th 2020, regular emails have been sent to the Ministry of Health. ACE Executives have been working with the Assistant Deputy Minister and the Executive Director of Ministry of Health to try and make them understand what people with disabilities are going through.

A formal request was put forward that the needs of people with disabilities be more on the forefront on their minds. The feeling in the community is that of being left behind and that they are not being supported in this Pandemic.

A list of essential requests were put forward and following are those items still awaiting response:

- a. **Getting access to Medical Supplies:** The Ministry has been asked to get back to us before the end of this meeting today [March 30 2020]. An email reply stated that they have been diligently working to be able to answer our questions and our concerns and are also trying to put a plan together to be able to provide further feedback to us. They are having to work through specific policy processes on many items.

We need to voice our opinion loud about this!

- b. Continue to clarify the communication order from the Provincial Health Officer as it relates to our community care. The damaging affect to us has been that when orders come down, there is too much misinformation around it.

The peer group supported the effort to communicate regularly Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer. Doing so would provide her with the knowledge that her directives and the interpretation of same, are inadvertently preventing people with disabilities, who live in the community, from receiving essential care.

- c. The ability for CSIL employers to have their employees continue to attend to their needs in the event of hospitalization for reasons unrelated to COVID-19. Due to the level of care required for some CSIL Employers, hospital staff are unable to attend undertake that level of support.
- d. The ACE Executives also told the Ministry of Health that our expectations are that we be consulted in the decision-making processes as it relates to CSIL Employers.
- e. **The Cluster Components:** A Communication was sent from the Vancouver Island Health Authority stating that all of the CSIL employees contact information be provided to them so they could monitor the cluster of where the caregivers are.

This is in relation to staff working in facilities because they do talk about the aspect of facility care. They do not want people to work for more than one facility.

The issue with that is not that they are not allowing caregivers to work in the community, it's that they didn't want people working in different facilities.

There has been clarity on this matter now: Caregivers are essential workers and the decisions being made need to be better clarified back to the public. However, there is still push back from the facility management as they interpret the order to include community employers.

The ACE Executives will continue to communicate with the Ministry of Health and request that they clarify the policy with the facilities.

The measures that the governments, both Provincial and Federal, have been implemented very quickly in a crisis that requires a high level of urgency. They have said that they recognize that they may have to revisit and make further adjustments as need be.

- 3) Self Isolation which leads to fewer to no staff
 - a) Many peers have decided not to have staff work over concerns of contagion
 - b) Some peers implement additional safety precautions with enhanced germ prevention protocols
- 4) Recruitment
 - a) Many CSIL Employers are experiencing difficult with recruitment during the COVID-19 crisis.
 - b) Participants suggested an option of sharing caregivers

- 5) Private Agencies
 - a) Some CSIL Employers are considering using agencies as a backup, however, some concerns are;
 - i) Problematic in that they may not screen staff well enough
 - ii) Staff could be working in facilities
 - iii) Or working for other private employers who are not observing recommended protocols

- 6) Participant suggest that ACE develop a template Letter for CSIL Employers to send to the Ministry of Health and Provincial Government which continues to put forward unresolved concerns and issues affecting CSIL Employers. Each person would have the ability to edit the content in order to make it their own, and then sign from themselves.
 - a) ACE will draft the template and send out to ACE members for their individual action if they so choose

8. BC Employment Standards New Legislation for COVID 19

The B.C. government has made 2 changes to the Employment Standards Act to support workers both during the COVID-19 public health emergency and in the long term.

Temporary Measures

Due to the suddenness of temporary measures, additional amendments may be made to the BC Employment Act.

1. Temporary Measures allow workers to take unpaid, job-protected leave if they are unable to work for **reasons relating to COVID-19**.
 - a. Employers can still terminate staff for other reasons
 - b. Remember to document matters of concern to validate all terminations and layoffs

2. **This means workers who are ill, need to self-isolate, need to care for their child or other dependent, or whose employer is concerned that the employee may expose others to risk, will be able to take leave without putting their job at risk.**
 - a. BC Employment Standards was consulted and they confirmed, that this also includes workers who are concerned about exposure at work and make the decision to stay at home.

3. The leave will be retroactive to Jan. 27, 2020, the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in the province.
 - a. If you have already terminated an employee for other reasons, ensure your documentation is in order.

4. This amendment will be repealed when the crisis is over.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, employers can expect to see work refusals from employees based on:

1. A confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19 in the workplace;
2. A confirmed case of COVID-19 in an employee's immediate family or other close contact;
3. The risk of potential exposure to COVID-19 from contractors, customers or clients depending on the nature of the workplace or the people it serves;
4. Concerns from employees who are particularly vulnerable (over age 65, compromised immune system, underlying medical condition) not wishing to report to work; or
5. Employees with a generalized fear of contracting COVID-19 by travelling to or attending work.

Permanent Change to the Act

The following amendment to the BC Employment Standards Act is permanent and brings British Columbia in line with the other provinces and territories of Canada.

Three (3) Days of unpaid, job-protected leave

The Permanent change to Act now includes 3 days of unpaid, job-protected leave each year for people who cannot work due to illness or injury.

- a. To qualify for the 3-day job-protected illness or injury leave;
 - i. employees must have worked for their employer for at least 90 days
 - ii. workers must give reasonable evidence of eligibility if their employer requests it

9. Layoffs

All Layoffs must be given with Written Notice and Employees must be paid final wages, vacation owed and be issued a Record of Employment (ROE).

If an employee's hours are reduced, they are considered laid off as soon as they earn less than 50 percent of their weekly wages (averaged over the previous 8 weeks)

Temporary Layoff:

Can only happen if the employee agrees to a Temporary Layoff after they have read and understood the terms.

A temporary Layoff can only be

- a. Up to 13 weeks in a period of 20 weeks (about 3 months in a period of 5 months)
 - i. Severance pay is not paid at the start of Temporary Layoffs
- b. If the temporary layoff goes beyond this, then it becomes a termination of employment (General Layoff)
 - i. The start date of the layoff would then become the termination date and the employer must give severance pay for length of service based on this date.

Legislation: In almost all employment relationships, it has long been the law that a temporary or permanent layoff triggers a worker's right to severance pay and so is the same as termination, being "let go", or "getting fired."

- c. 13 weeks is the longest a "temporary layoff" can be per the *Employment Standards Act* before Severance Pay must be provided.
- d. If layoff goes beyond 13 weeks, then the layoff because a permanent termination and severance pay must be given to the eligible employee.
- e. The Severance Pay is effective on the day the employee was first laid off, NOT the day where the layoff went from Temporary to Permanent.

General Layoff

Employers must provide employees with their severance pay, wages owed, vacation pay owed and a Record of employment.

- a. General Layoffs are considered termination
- b. You can still ask an employee to return to work
- c. Employees do not have to agree with your decision

10.How to Code the Record of Employment During COVID-19

- a. When employee is sick or quarantined, use Code D (Illness or injury) as the reason for separation (Block 16).
 - i. Do not add comments
- b. When the employee is no longer working due to shortage of work because business has closed or decreased due to coronavirus (in this case, CSIL taking steps to minimize exposure) – Use Code A (Shortage of work).
 - i. Do not add comments
- c. When the employee refused to come to work, but is not sick or quarantined, use Code E (Quite) or code N, (Leave of absence) as appropriate.
 - i. Avoid adding comments unless absolutely necessary

11.Canada Revenue – Emergency Response Benefits

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit will provide temporary income support for workers and parents without paid sick leave (or similar workplace accommodation) who are sick, quarantined or have to stay home to care for children.

For those eligible to apply for EI, the mandatory one-week waiting period for sickness benefits has been waived, as well as the requirement for a medical certificate.

Through the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, those who are ineligible for EI and don't have access to paid sick leave will be able to receive up to \$2000/month, for four months.

These funds will be available in early April through an online system, and funds will be dispersed through direct deposit. No medical documentation will be required.

The Federal Government's business subsidy for payroll eligibility is that the business has to have experienced a minimum of 30% reduction in revenue since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, so would not apply to CSIL Employers.

CRA will provide a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months to:

Workers who must stop working due to COVID-19 and do not have access to paid leave or other income support.

1. Workers who are sick, quarantined, or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19.
2. Working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children who are sick or need additional care because of school and daycare closures.
3. Workers who still have their employment but are not being paid because there is currently not sufficient work and their employer has asked them not to come to work.

12. Paying Family Exception

At the meeting there had no response from the Ministry of Health regarding ACE's request to hire family during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On April 1st, the Ministry of Health has provided a notice to relax policies for three (3) months so CSIL Employers can hire family without filing an application for the Exception under Policy 4.C.4, Payment Family Members.

This is excellent news, but please take note of any additional instructions the Health Authorities include in their emails. If you have concerns, do not hesitate to contact ACE Executives at ACE@ifrcsociety.org

A copy of the notice from the Ministry of Health is included with the uploads.

13. General Financial Information

1. **To help families and businesses** struggling financially through the COVID-19 crisis, the BC Govt will make one-time payments of \$1,000 to people who are now out of work
2. **Temporary Rental Supplement** applies to people who are experiencing reduced hours or layoffs. BC offers \$500 a month for renters, bans evictions and rent increases.
 - a. The funds will be paid directly to the landlords on behalf of the renters
 - i. The govt is still working out the details on how to distribute funds to rental properties where multiple people live.
 - b. Relief for financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
 - c. Do not qualify for existing rental assistance programs

3. Federal Government Business Wage Subsidy

The Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers is a three-month measure that will allow eligible employers to reduce the amount of payroll deductions required to be remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

- a. Eligibility
 - i. Individual
 - ii. Partnership
 - iii. Non-Profit Organization
 - iv. Registered Charity
 - v. Canadian Controlled Private Corporation

14. Translink

To use, or not to use Transit during the COVID-19 is a personal decision. There are many reports that buses and trains are mostly empty, but the decision you make is based upon your comfort level and the risks you face due to health issues.

Below please find Translinks Public Announcement addressing COVID-19 Precautions.

Updated: April 1, 2020 - 8:45 a.m.

<https://new.translink.ca/rider-guide/coronavirus-precautions>

TransLink is following the lead of health officials when it comes to our response to COVID-19. We want to remind everyone that we need to work together, and that we need your help to keep the system safe and clean for yourself and those around you.

- **Limited Seating on Buses:** To support physical distancing between passengers, bus seating has been limited and standing is prohibited.
- **Bus Fares Suspended:** Given we are promoting physical distancing by asking customers to board buses through the rear doors when possible, TransLink has temporarily suspended fare collection on the bus system.
- **HandyDART Fares Suspended:** TransLink has suspended fare collection on the HandyDART system. Because HandyDART fare payment can often require close interaction between operators and customers, we're taking this step to protect operators and promote physical distancing.

Cleaning Measures:

- **Facilities:** Stations and bus loops across the TransLink network are being cleaned at least once per day, including a disinfectant wipe down of stair and escalator handrails, elevator buttons, door handles, fare gates, Compass vending machines, garbage handles, benches, seats, emergency cabinets and emergency phones.
- **SkyTrain:** All SkyTrain cars are cleaned overnight and receive a disinfectant wipe down of poles, seats, ceilings, handles, windows, sills, and other surfaces within the cars.

- **Bus & SeaBus:** The entire Bus and SeaBus fleet are being sprayed using a strong disinfectant each week, which comes in addition to daily cleaning schedules.
- **HandyDART:** vehicles are being cleaned and disinfected every day.
- **West Coast Express:** All West Coast Express cars are cleaned and disinfected each evening once they come out of service.

TransLink is closely monitoring the situation and we remain in contact with regional health authorities and other transit agencies in order to determine best practices and ensure our response is appropriate.

Seating Limits on Buses to Promote Physical Distancing

TransLink has limited seating on buses in Metro Vancouver to promote physical distancing. Roughly half the seats on board buses have signage installed to indicate that those seats are to be left vacant, which allow for extra space between customers. If the new seated capacity is reached, bus operators will not make any further stops to collect passengers, who will have to wait for the next bus.

Given declining ridership is resulting in far fewer passengers on the system, it's not expected these changes will impact travel times on the majority of bus routes. However, commuters who use busier routes should consider building in additional travel time and consider their need to travel, particularly during rush hours. Public transit remains crucial for thousands of essential service workers in the region, including those in the healthcare sector.

TransLink is also undertaking other initiatives to promote physical distancing:

- Customers are being asked to board buses using the rear doors where possible, with the exception of those requiring mobility assistance.
- Limiting seating on buses: To support physical distancing between passengers, bus seating will be limited and standing prohibited.
- Only sit in unmarked bus seats and refrain from standing on buses while on board.
- Seating close to bus operators is already limited on certain buses.
- An education campaign has been launched asking customers to allow extra space for fellow passengers when on board transit.
- Coast Mountain Bus Company is accelerating installation of operator protection barriers on all buses.
- HandyDART has suspended fare collection in order to promote physical distancing between operators and customers.
- Customers are not able to use seats close to crew on SeaBus vessels.

Any updated travel advice and information will be provided via Transit Alerts and on Twitter.

Additional information specific to COVID-19 can also be found at translink.ca/covid19.

All of the above measures will remain in place until further notice.

Transit Service Reductions

Given ridership has significantly decreased on transit over the past few weeks, TransLink has made minor service reductions to SeaBus, bus, SkyTrain, and West Coast Express services.

- SeaBus has changed to sailings every 15-minutes during weekday rush hours, instead of every 10-minutes.
- Bus routes which have excess capacity, including those with empty buses, will have some frequencies reduced.
- Expo and Millennium Lines will see slight frequency reductions, with first and last train schedules remaining in place.
- West Coast Express has cancelled the 5:55 a.m. departure from Mission and 4:20 p.m. departure from Waterfront.
- TransLink is carefully monitoring passenger levels in order to balance lower ridership with the need to maintain social distancing.

HandyDART Fare Collection Suspended

TransLink has suspended fare collection on the HandyDART system.

Because HandyDART fare payment can often require close interaction between operators and customers, we're taking this step to protect operators and promote physical distancing.

Fare collection is also suspended for conventional bus to reduce close contact between operators and customers.

Regular fares still apply on SkyTrain, West Coast Express, and SeaBus as payment doesn't involve any person-to-person interaction.

This comes in addition to several other operational changes we've made to improve cleanliness and allow for more social distancing on HandyDART:

- HandyDART vehicles are being cleaned and disinfected every day.
- HandyDART operators are spacing customers out in vehicles wherever possible, to promote social distancing.
- Every HandyDART operator is being supplied with a sanitizing kit which includes gloves, as well as hand sanitizer bottles or sanitizing wipes.

Customers are cancelling around 70% of HandyDART trips daily, resulting in significantly fewer customers travelling on each bus, and therefore greater social distancing.

Translink Moves to Rear Door Boarding on Buses to Promote Physical Distancing

Customers are asked to board buses using the rear doors only. Given Translink cannot collect cash fares at the rear doors, we are also suspending fare collection on the bus system.

We are taking this step to allow greater physical distancing to protect our Coast Mountain Bus Company operators at this time. Customers requiring mobility assistance can continue to use the front doors if needed.

Regular fares still apply on other Translink modes.

TransLink has also implemented the following changes:

- Customers will not be able to use seats close to operators on certain buses.
- Accelerating the installation of operator protection barriers on buses.
- Customers will not be able to use seats close to crew on SeaBus vessels.
- Launching an education campaign promoting hygiene and asking customers to allow extra space for fellow passengers and transit staff.
- Increasing cleaning and disinfecting on all modes of transit.

As extraordinary physical distancing measures are being put into place across the region, TransLink has also seen a commensurate and significant decline in ridership. This means there are far fewer passengers using the system, which allows for greater physical distancing.

Taxi/Cab Companies

General consensus was that private Taxi/Cab companies cannot be relied upon to thoroughly disinfect their vehicles.

15. Additional Contributions from Participants

Many CSIL Employers reported that they are experiencing issues around isolation during the COVID-19 crisis, as it affects independence, social interaction and overall wellbeing. Coming together in a group to discuss issues, fears and personal trepidations of the months to come, helped to form a bridge back into a community.

Pathways To Independence is more than a question and answer period, but an opportunity to build a culture of support and community strength for British Columbians living with disabilities.

Included below are additional points made in the meeting and we sincerely hope that CSIL Employers will continue to be engaged in this community and meet challenges as a team.

Wheelchair Cleanliness and Hygiene

A peer has provided posters for the home and work area. They have been uploaded and everyone is urged to pass them on.

Disinfecting Groceries and Supplies

1. When shopping, in person or online, wipe down the packages and containers with disinfectant wipes. Wash vegetables in soapy water, rinse and store in refrigerator as normal.
2. Cardboard boxes cannot be wiped down, so you need let it stand untouched for up to 48 hours before you unpack.
3. Oxygenated water helps long after soap, alcohol and chlorine, because peroxide dissolves the virus protein, but you have to use it pure and it hurts your skin. * NO BACTERICIDE OR ANTIBIOTIC SERVES.

The virus is not a living organism like bacteria; antibodies cannot kill what is not alive. """" NEVER shake used or unused clothing, sheets or cloth. While it is glued to a porous surface, it is very inert and disintegrates only -between 3 hours (fabric and porous), -4 hours (copper and wood) -24 hours (cardboard), - 42 hours (metal) and -72 hours (plastic).

But if you shake it or use a feather duster, the virus molecules float in the air for up to 3 hours and can lodge in your nose. The virus molecules remain very stable in external cold, or artificial as air conditioners in houses and cars. They also need moisture to stay stable, and especially darkness.

Therefore, dehumidified, dry, warm and bright environments will degrade it faster.

Homemade Face Masks

Several participants brought up points about using homemade masks. We are providing some feed back from Health Canada around Homemade Masks.

Homemade masks may include those that are:

- made of cloth e.g., cotton
- with pockets to insert other masks or filters
- to be worn over N95 respirators (in an effort to reuse respirators)

Homemade masks are not medical devices and consequently are not regulated, like medical masks and respirators. Their use poses a number of limitations:

- they have not been tested to recognized standards
- they may not provide complete protection against virus-sized particles
- the edges are not designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth
- the fabrics are not the same as used in surgical masks or respirators

- they can be difficult to breathe through and can prevent you from getting the required amount of oxygen needed by your body
- they may require frequent adjustment, increasing the amount of times your hands come into contact with your face and increasing the probability of infection

These types of masks may not be effective in blocking virus particles that may be transmitted by coughing, sneezing or certain medical procedures. They do not provide complete protection from the coronavirus because of a potential loose fit and the materials used.

A NIOSH or equivalent approved N95 surgical respirators are designed to reduce the risk of inhaling hazardous airborne particles and aerosols. These respirators are medical devices authorized by Health Canada. An N95 respirator is a respiratory protective device designed to achieve a very close facial fit and very efficient filtration of airborne particles. The 'N95' designation means that when subjected to careful testing the respirator blocks at least 95% of very small test particles.

Medical masks are also medical devices that use materials that block at least 95% of very small test particles, however, they do not fit tightly to the face, so are not designed to provide complete protection for the wearer. Both respirators and masks need to be used in combination with appropriate eye protection (e.g., face shield, goggles) to achieve full protection of the eyes, nose and mouth.

Health Canada has provided important information on optimizing the use of masks and respirators during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Public Health Agency of Canada guidance on preventing coronavirus includes guidance on wearing masks, if necessary, and includes the following:

- If you are a healthy individual, the use of a mask is not recommended for preventing the spread of COVID-19
- Wearing a mask when you are not ill may give a false sense of security
- There is a potential risk of infection with improper mask use and disposal
- They also need to be changed frequently
- However, your health care provider may recommend you wear a mask if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 while you are seeking or waiting for care. In this instance, masks are an appropriate part of infection prevention and control measures. The mask acts as a barrier and helps stop the tiny droplets from spreading you when you cough or sneeze.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-devices/activities/announcements/covid19-notice-home-made-masks.html>

How safe are food delivery and takeout during the new coronavirus pandemic?

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/how-safe-are-food-delivery-and-takeout-during-the-new-coronavirus-pandemic-1.4861597>

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- Individualized Funding Resource Centre and Technology for Living staff for organizational and administrative support

Association for CSIL Employers (ACE): If you are not a member of ACE and would like to participate in the private Facebook group, you can send a request to join at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CSIL.ACE/>

Disclaimer: This is a peer group conversation. The views and opinions expressed by the participants do not necessarily reflect those of the IFRC or TIL.