

Memorandum

Date: June 29, 2021
To: Investigators, research staff and trainees at VCH
From: Dr. David Granville, Executive Director, VCHRI and Assoc Dean, Research (VCHRI), Faculty of Medicine
Re: Reopening Plan for Research

In accordance with a recent UBC Bulletin issued by Dr. Santa Ono, UBC has implemented its new, streamlined safety planning process in alignment with Step 3 of *BC's Restart* plan (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restart>). Seven institutional safety plans are available, to be applied to UBC and VCH Research Institute (VCHRI) learning, research and/or administrative spaces, until we shift to a more general communicable disease plan, as advised by Dr. Bonnie Henry ([Ministry of Health and \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)). This plan will apply basic risk reduction principles that will reduce the risk of not only COVID-19 transmission, but of all communicable diseases that affect the workplace. Those working in health authority clinical spaces (i.e. patient wards, ICU) must continue to follow health authority IPAC guidelines (<http://ipac.vch.ca/>).

By taking a standardized, institutional approach, individual Faculties and administrative units will not need to create new safety plans for their area, and will only need to follow the measures outlined in applicable institutional safety plan(s). This will ensure a consistent approach across the organization, encompassing our campuses and other sites.

Safety Plans and information:

- Link to 7 UBC Safety Plans: <https://srs.ubc.ca/covid-19/covid-19-safety-plans/> **Note:** The seven new COVID-19 Safety Plans do not require customization, just implementation (replacing existing VCHRI Institute and VCHRI Centre/Department/group safety plans), and are applicable UBC-wide and at VCHRI. They are based on your work activities, so simply choose the plan(s) that suits your work situation. For example, if your work activity includes a laboratory, office, and common spaces, you will need to reference three applicable COVID-19 Safety Plans. Unlike the previous COVID-19 Safety Plan, the new plans do not require to be submitted or approved.
- Link to FAQ's: <https://srs.ubc.ca/covid-19/safety-plans-faq/>
- Link to: Returning to Campus/Courses: <https://srs.ubc.ca/training/welcome-back-being-aware-and-taking-care/>
- Sector specific safety plans for services such as events will still be required. If you need assistance in developing these plans please email ready.ubc@ubc.ca at UBC Vancouver.
- Occupancy limits should gradually increase – Public Health/WorkSafe BC are expected to communicate additional information on this topic in the near future;

COVID-19 Campus Rules

The COVID-19 Campus Rules are framed around [Step 3 of the BC Restart plan](#). The earliest date that the Public Health Officer will move to step 3 is **July 1, 2021** and will extend until the start of step 4 which is anticipated to begin September 7, 2021 at the earliest.

- **Daily health self-assessments:** A daily self-health assessment is required before attending campus/work on site.
- **Stay home if you are sick:** If you feel sick stay home use the [Thrive Health](#) self-assessment tool for guidance. Follow the advice from [Public Health](#).
- **Mandatory training:** All UBC faculty and staff currently working-on or returning to campus must complete the mandatory online training module “UBC Go Forward COVID-19 Safety Planning” training.
- **COVID-19 signage:** Everyone must follow relevant signage when moving around UBC campuses or worksites.
- **COVID-19 safety plans:** Supervisors will ensure that all faculty, staff and contractors are familiar with the relevant work activity specific COVID-19 Safety Plan(s).
- **Non-medical masks:** Non-medical masks are recommended in public indoor settings.

Return to campus — support resources

Support resources have been developed to help guide unit heads and managers through the transition process for returning to campus — ensuring we continue our commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of the UBC community. They include information on UBC’s safety protocols, campus return expectations, employee supports, operational supports and campus services. You can access them at: UBC Vancouver: <https://academic.ubc.ca/campus-return-planning-guide>; <https://covid19.ubc.ca>

Human Resources (HR) support

A resource planning spreadsheet and process guide are available through Senior HR Leaders. You can learn more about UBC’s remote work approach at <https://hr.ubc.ca/remote-work-ubc>. Should you need further guidance please contact your Senior HR Leader: UBC Vancouver: <https://hr.ubc.ca/contact/contact-advisory-services>. VCH managers should connect with appropriate VCH HR advisors.

Mandatory Training

A new “UBC Go Forward COVID-19 Safety Planning Training” course will be available soon (at the Safety and Risk Services website (<https://srs.ubc.ca/training/mandatory-training-for-all-ubc-workers/>)) and will be applicable to all prior to returning to site. All UBC employees are required to complete the mandatory online COVID-19 safety training (UBC Vancouver | UBC Okanagan) prior to resuming on-campus activities, or as soon as possible if they have been working on campus since the remote working arrangements were put in place. The new course replaces the previous “Preventing COVID-19 Infection in the Workplace” course as there have

been updates to the prevention measures. There may also be a site-specific orientation required by your supervisor or department.

Research Resumption Process

Step 3 of *BC's Restart* plan for Offices and Workplaces allows for continued return to the workplace and seminars, bigger meetings. UBC/VCHRI is expecting to gradually ramp up of activities starting July 1 (when more restrictions are lifted including physical distancing) to allow for everyone to adjust to these changes and to increase occupancy. Public Health and WorkSafeBC will be providing more information on this soon to support employers and workers to make this important transition, however, **effective July 1, 2021, VCHRI Research Resumption approvals are no longer required.**

We would like to reiterate the vital importance of getting fully vaccinated as we move towards a safe return to in-person research activity this fall. It is encouraging to see that the number of COVID-19 cases is decreasing, and that the provincial government is continuing to ease restrictions under *BC's Restart* plan. But success depends on us all supporting the provincial immunization program. If you haven't yet done so, we encourage you to register and book your vaccine. You can learn more at <https://immunizebc.ca>.