

## **2021 COVID-19 Inspection Program Safety Procedures**

COVID-19 in British Columbia is a serious threat to public health. The current pandemic has necessitated the development and implementation of safety procedures to reduce the risk to both owners and inspectors of becoming infected with COVID – 19. The following safety procedures will be observed and practiced by both owners and inspectors throughout the time each managed forest is being inspected.

The primary means of preventing the spread of COVID-19 is through physical distancing, i.e., keeping 2 meters distance between people. The virus is transmitted via liquid droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The droplets fall on people and objects close to the sneezing or coughing person. The virus is carried in these droplets and deposits on the eyes, nose, or mouth if someone is in close contact with an infected person. A secondary means of transmitting the virus is through a contaminated surface. Physical distancing is supported by good hygiene practice, and ensuring surfaces remain clean and sanitized. Therefore, good hygiene, washing hands frequently, sanitation, and cleaning surfaces that people may touch, are critical to preventing the spread of COVID-19.

### **General Procedures**

- Inspectors and owners will monitor and observe public health advisories and guidance applicable to the inspection process, including orders from the provincial health officer and guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control and WorkSafe BC.
- It is voluntary for owners to participate in the field portion of their inspection.
- Provincial health guidelines require anyone with COVID-19 symptoms such as sore throat, fever, muscle aches, sneezing, coughing, or difficulty breathing to self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days.
- Where an owner elects to participate in the inspection, they must inform the Managed Forest Council office if at the time of the scheduled inspection they or anyone living in the same household have COVID-19 symptoms or are self-isolating from such. In such circumstances, inspectors will not carry out the inspection with the owner present. The inspection may proceed without the owner being present or may be rescheduled to an appropriate time.
- Inspectors must not carry out inspections until a minimum of 14 days after any COVID-19 symptoms they or anyone living in the same household have ended.
- Owners may have additional COVID-19 related safety plans and protocols which will be adhered to by the inspector.

## **Field Procedures**

- The owner and the inspector will maintain appropriate social distancing of no less than 2 meters (6 feet) apart.
- Where travel to the inspection site is necessary, the owner and inspector will ride in separate vehicles.
- Sharing paper documents will be avoided; documents will be provided electronically prior to the start of the inspection where possible.
- Inspectors and owners will have appropriate personal protective equipment. This includes hand sanitizer, gloves, and a mask.
- It is expected that owners and inspectors will practice proper sanitation at all times, including washing hands with soap and water (or using hand sanitizer where this is not practical), coughing or sneezing into one's elbow to minimize spread, and wearing disposable gloves whenever it may be necessary to exchange material.
- Public health guidelines recommend that masks be worn to minimize spread of the virus. Inspectors will wear a mask where requested to do so by the owner. Masks must be worn where circumstances require proximity less than 2 meters apart.
- Inspectors should not enter indoor premises on the owner's property unless absolutely necessary in which case masks and gloves will be worn.

## **Document Review Procedures**

- Where possible, inspectors will conduct the review of an owner's documents and assessments over the phone, through e-mails, or using one of the many internet video platforms now available (eg. WebEx, Zoom, etc.).
- If the sharing of documents electronically is not possible and a review must take place in an office setting, the inspector must follow appropriate guidelines developed by the owner for their office, the procedures outlined in this document, and all Provincial Health Officer guidance on reducing the risks of contracting COVID-19 while in a close contact setting. This includes maintaining physical distancing, wearing a mask when in proximity less than 2 meters to others, wearing gloves where appropriate, and washing hands both before and afterward.

If you have questions regarding your upcoming inspection or these procedures please contact your inspector or our office.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PHOL'.

Executive Director