

Bench 

COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN



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The safety and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, partners, and visitors is our top priority—always. The policies and procedures contained in this document are part of the COVID-19 Safety Plan (the “Safety Plan”) required by law and include measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. All Benchmates and essential visitors to Bench are required to follow these protocols diligently and take steps to ensure compliance by others working in or visiting our offices. It is important that we all respond cooperatively, responsibly, and transparently to this pandemic.

We’re closely monitoring the changing landscape of COVID-19 so we can make the best decisions possible to support our people. This document will be updated as circumstances evolve and with input from Benchmates and other users of our office. It is and will continue to be guided by directives and recommendations from WorkSafeBC, BC Centre for Disease Control (“CDC”), the BC Public Health Officer/ Ministry of Health, and other governing authorities. Updated versions of the document will be shared as promptly as possible.

Returning to the Office

Bench has created this Safety Plan to support the return of Benchmates to our office in a coordinated, well-planned, and safe manner.

This Safety Plan and any related policies apply to all Benchmates and visitors to Bench's office. Everyone must review and comply with this Safety Plan and any other policies and directions provided as part of the Safety Plan.

Employee and Visitor Safety

A number of safety procedures and guidelines must be in place in order to safely return Benchmates to the office. Each Benchmate must understand and comply with all safety requirements. We will have “floor wardens” on each floor of the office to answer questions and help ensure people are following the Safety Plan. We have implemented a number of exposure control measures, including:

Physical Distancing

- The office has been reconfigured to ensure appropriate physical distancing requirements of 2 meters between people can always be maintained.
- Maximum occupancy signs are posted outside and in “Communal Spaces”, which include the kitchens, social areas, copier stations, elevators, stairwells, and meeting rooms (once they are re-opened).
- Where a two-meter distance cannot be maintained, further engineering controls will be established such as installing physical barriers and/or re-arranging the workspace to maintain physical distancing.

- Masks should be worn where physical distancing cannot be maintained during prolonged interaction and engineering controls are not available (see below for more on PPE).

Within the Office

- Meeting rooms will not be available until further notice. When meeting rooms reopen, please remember to respect social distancing guidelines.
- Where possible, windows should be left open to encourage fresh airflow.
- Avoid touching surfaces unnecessarily and door handles when possible.
- Movement through the office should generally be done in a counter-clockwise direction. The intention is to avoid points of contact where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Hand Washing Etiquette

- Everyone should wash hands with soap for 20 seconds upon arriving at the office and frequently throughout the day.
- Everyone should practice cough/sneeze etiquette and avoid touching their eyes, mouth, and nose (“face touching avoidance”). The coronavirus can be spread by touch if a person has used their hands to cover a cough or sneeze. Additional tissues will be available in the office.
- Hand sanitizer will be available for use at various locations throughout the office. Hand washing or hand sanitizer must be used prior to using the copiers or other shared equipment (e.g., staplers, scanners). Signage is posted for proper etiquette in all Communal Spaces.
- Hand sanitizer is a secondary support meant to be used in addition to, not as a replacement for, hand washing.

Cleaning

- Enhanced cleaning procedures and protocols for regular wiping/cleaning of high-touch surfaces in the office are being implemented.
- Our landlord has increased these practices in common areas within the building (elevators, washrooms, stairwells).
- Everyone should avoid unnecessarily touching common surfaces. Benchmates are encouraged to disinfect their desk areas and to minimize the items left on desk surfaces to encourage routine cleaning. We will be stocking disinfectant wipes that can be used for this purpose.
- Additional disinfecting of surfaces in Communal Spaces will need to be practiced by all users. Signage is posted with further instructions.

Common Areas: Elevators and Stairs

- Benchmates should avoid using elevators and/or follow physical distancing restrictions, depending on the elevator size.
- Our landlord has not required occupants to wear masks while in common areas of the building.

Communal Spaces

- Every space that is used as a Communal Space has been assessed to determine the maximum capacity for each space. Information about the maximum capacity of each space is posted.
- Benchmates are asked to bring their own cutlery, dishes, and containers from home to cut down on the potential for cross-contamination. Bench will only provide glassware until further notice.
- No dish bins will be provided. Benchmates must place any Bench dishes directly in the dishwasher. Preferably, Benchmates will bring their own containers and wash them at home.

- BenchBuys snacks and produce will not be provided until further notice.
- Meeting rooms are closed until further notice. When they reopen, chairs will be reconfigured or removed to comply with capacity limits.
- Social areas have been reconfigured to maintain physical distancing and enhanced cleaning protocols are being applied to soft surfaces.

Shared Equipment

- Cleaning protocol for shared equipment (e.g., staplers, copiers, scanners) is posted, and cleaning supplies are readily available.

Mental Health and Wellness

- Bench values its employees and appreciates that this is an unprecedented time. Confidential resources are available through our benefit plan for anyone who needs additional support.
- Bench's goal is to support its employees' overall well-being and provide a safe work environment. We will continue to support flexible working from home arrangements for the foreseeable future for those Benchmates that can effectively work from home. For Benchmates that face challenges working from home, and would prefer to work in the office, we will support flexible in-office work arrangements including regular full-time in-office work weeks.
- Our ability to work remotely offers flexibility to ensure that Benchmates are able to stay home if they or someone within a Benchmate household exhibits any signs of COVID-19 illness.

Illness

- No Benchmates or visitors are to enter the office if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. This may include but is not limited to:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Sore throat or painful swallowing
- Shortness of breath
- New muscle aches or headache
- Other flu-like symptoms

If a Benchmate exhibits any symptoms, they will be asked to go home immediately in a manner that protects the safety of themselves and others. The Benchmate will be advised to consult a physician/811. The Benchmate's work area must be cleaned promptly and in a safe manner. Click [here](#) for more information.

- If you are symptomatic but still able to work, then you may work remotely rather than take a sick day.
- Specifically, as directed by the CDC and WorkSafeBC, anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and painful swallowing must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days or longer if still symptomatic. Anyone under the direction of the provincial health officer to self-isolate must follow these instructions. Anyone who has arrived from outside Canada, or who was in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.

Visitor/Employee Interaction

- Our business will continue to be conducted remotely whenever possible (email, phone, video).
- In-office meetings should be kept to a minimum and must respect social distancing requirements. Masks and sanitizer will be available for use.
- Only Benchmates approved to work in the office will have their fobs activated.

- Benchmate arrival and departure times will be staggered to help ensure appropriate physical distancing requirements are met and interaction is limited in stairwells and elevators.
- Unauthorized Benchmates and/or visitors (“tailgaters”) will not be permitted to enter the office.
- Authorized visitors include cleaning staff and other approved service workers. Any authorized visitors will be required to sign in and out and may be requested to complete a safety questionnaire before visiting the office.
- All food deliveries must be met outside.
- No personal deliveries will be accepted at the office.

Awareness

- Benchmates and visitors will be made aware of all safety protocols and procedures. We will circulate this Safety Plan to all Benchmates and will also post the Safety Plan in the office and on our website.
- Reminders and updates will be provided on a regular basis. This is a global pandemic and requires a level of flexibility as expectations and protocols may change rapidly.

Dogs

- Dogs will be permitted in the office, provided they follow the existing Facilities guidelines.
- Dogs from a household of an infected person must be quarantined.
- Dog owners should maintain good hygiene, including washing hands before and after handling their animals, their food, and supplies.
- Dog owners are responsible for ensuring their dogs stay 6 feet away from other employees.

Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- The appropriate PPE to be used, in combination with other controls, has been determined through a risk assessment analysis. Based on current expectations for our return to the office working practices, we do not expect there to be a need for PPE to be worn while working in the office. However, if you wish to wear a mask for your own comfort then you are encouraged to do so.
- We will have a supply of non-surgical masks for Benchmates and visitors to use if they do not have their own.

Travel

- Benchmates should review the Government of Canada travel health notices before undertaking any travel, particularly to an international destination. Currently, no one should travel internationally unless necessary for business or an emergency. Insurers have indicated that they will not cover international travel, and where applicable, we will provide the contact information for advice on any company-provided insurance.
- Benchmates who have traveled outside the country will be asked to “self-isolate” and either work remotely or take a paid leave of absence for 14 days upon their return to Canada, as currently directed by federal and provincial governments. Benchmates may return to the office after 14 days if no COVID-19 symptoms emerge.
- Benchmates who travel outside of the province, but within Canada, are asked to communicate with us in advance of booking their intended plans. This allows us to determine whether any measures need to be taken while traveling and/or upon their return. This will evolve as the government’s phased opening unfolds.

COVID-19 Diagnosis

- If a Benchmate has a family member (or someone they have been in close contact with) who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, then the Benchmate is required to self-isolate for a 14-day period. This leave will be paid.
- If a Benchmate has tested positive for COVID-19, the Benchmate's return to work will depend on the advice of the physician or other qualified medical practitioner.
- If a Benchmate working in the office reports any flu-like symptoms, including a fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath, or other symptoms that may be indicative of COVID-19, the Benchmate will be sent home and advised to consult a medical practitioner/811. For more information, please click [here](#).
- If a Benchmate has tested positive and has attended the office or been in contact with other Benchmates within the 14 days prior to the confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, all Benchmates who may have been in contact with the individual will be notified. The co-workers will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days and seek medical advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- For confirmed cases, Bench will consult local health authorities for further information on the next best steps.

Next Steps

There are a variety of other human resources, safety, technology, efficiency, building management, and cultural considerations that will need to be considered as everyone returns to work. Determinations will be made as the situation develops. Ongoing changes are expected as the risk factors and recommendations from the health authorities evolve. Your flexibility and cooperation are essential.

Questions, concerns, and suggestions are encouraged and should be directed to Adrian Marcia or Shane Roberts.