

Avalanche Canada Covid-19 Safety Plan

Version 2, September 24, 2020

Avalanche Canada

Covid-19 Safety Plan

Overview

Knowledge about the Coronavirus that causes Covid-19 is evolving. This safety plan is a living document that will be revised and updated if new information becomes available and/or when safety standards or requirements are revised by provincial or federal health or worker safety agencies.

All AvCan staff will be provided with access to this safety plan and will be notified of any changes. Notification will be by email, by posting printed notices on the staff bulletin board, and in regular staff meetings.

This safety plan has been developed in collaboration with AvCan's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). Committee members are:

- Jennifer Coulter (co-chair)
- James Floyer (co-chair)
- Mark Bender
- Mary Clayton
- Jennifer George
- Breeana Hartley
- Brent Strand

Employee health and safety are AvCan's highest priority. Anyone who feels unsafe from Covid-19 (or any other work-related environment or condition) is encouraged to speak to their supervisor, a manager, or the Executive Director. Avalanche Canada will do anything possible to protect employee health and safety. Anyone who feels uncomfortable approaching supervisors, managers, or the ED can also bring their concerns to the Joint Health and Safety Committee, who can bring concerns to the organization on behalf of an employee.

Workplace Risk Assessment

This risk assessment was carried out on 2020-07-10. A scheduled review will take place on or about 2020-11-10 and the risk assessment will be updated if required before forecasting and field operations begin. Unscheduled reviews will take place if any substantive changes to AvCan workplaces occur, if significant new information about Covid-19 become available, upon request from an employee, or upon request by the JHSC. If a review results in changes to the workplace risk assessment, the plan as a whole will be reviewed and updated to mitigate the new or changed risks identified in the updated assessment.

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, or from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. In assessing Covid-19 risk AvCan has considered following:

Where do people congregate, such as break rooms, or meeting rooms?

- Entryways to buildings
- Offices
- Kitchen area
- Board room
- Hallways
- Garage, machine shed, and storage bays
- Vehicles
- Snowmobile trailers
- Parking/staging areas where ski or snowmobile trips begin and end
- Backcountry cabins and shelters
- Motel/hotel rooms
- Restaurants

What job tasks or processes require workers to come into close proximity with one another or members of the public?

- Breaks and meals
- In-person meetings
- Travel, including:
 - Company vehicles
 - Public transit
 - Aircraft
 - Commercial ground transportation (taxi, airport shuttle, etc.)
 - Loading/unloading snowmobiles and other equipment
 - Overnight stays
 - Eating out at restaurants
 - Preparing communal meals
- Administering first aid/emergency response
 - Indoor workspaces (e.g. office, garage, storage area, mail room)
 - Outdoor workplaces (e.g. in/around vehicles, staging areas, back-country)
- Greeting/escorting visitors to/in/around buildings and operations
- Working with contractors
- Shipping/Receiving:
 - Packing/unpacking shipments
 - Courier/shipping staff including assisting with loading/unloading
 - Post office drop-off/pickup
 - Public pickup/dropoff of goods or equipment

- Purchasing, e.g.:
 - Office supplies
 - Food/groceries for trips
 - Fuel
 - Equipment for repairs and maintenance
- Garbage and recycling
- Media interviews

What tools, machinery, and equipment do people come into contact with in the course of their work?

- Computers and peripherals (screens, scanners, printers, mice, headsets/mics, keyboards).
- Office phones
- Mobile phones
- Postal meter
- Kitchenware and appliances, including:
 - Refrigerator
 - Microwave and toaster oven
 - Coffee and tea making equipment
 - Popcorn maker
 - Mugs, glasses, dishes and cutlery
- Vehicles
- Trailers
- Snowmobiles
- Sled decks
- Padlocks
- Keys (vehicle, snowmobile, gate lock, trailer lock, etc.)
- Tools and parts e.g. in garage/equipment bays
- Safety and protective equipment, e.g.:
 - Avalanche airbags
 - Transceivers
 - Avalanche probes and shovels
 - Radios
 - Satellite phones, communications and locator devices

What surfaces are touched often, such as doorknobs, light switches, equipment, and shared tools?

- Desks
- Computers and peripherals (screens, scanners, printers, mice, headsets/mics, keyboards).
- Office Chairs and couches
- Doorknobs
- Garage doors
- Alarm consoles
- Stair rails
- Light switches
- Bathroom appliances and surfaces
- Cabinet doors, drawers, and countertops (e.g. kitchen, reception, shipping areas, filing cabinets)
- Garbage and recycling containers/bags.

Risk Management Strategies

AvCan's Covid-19 risk management strategy consists of several layers to minimize the potential for exposure and transmission.

Staff Information and Training:

All staff will be provided with a copy of the Covid-19 Safety Plan as follows:

- An electronic copy will be sent to all staff.
- A link to a copy in a shared cloud folder will be provided.
- A physical copy will be kept in a prominent location at each workplace:
 - Revelstoke office.
 - South Rockies field program office.
 - North Rockies field program office.
 - Yukon field program office.
 - Newfoundland and Labrador office.

When changes or updates are made all staff will be notified by the following means:

- Email, with a link to the updated plan and/or a copy of the updated plan attached.
- In person at staff meetings (virtual or physical), where a printed copy of the updated plan will be available for reference.
- In person when supervisors and team leaders are interacting (virtually or physically) with staff.
- Posting a physical notice at the locations of the physical copies that are kept at each workplace.

A training session will be provided to all staff to familiarize them with the plan. Training will review the main policies and procedure; inform staff about where to find detailed information; and offer an avenue for providing feedback, suggestions, comments, and concerns.

See Appendix A for a training plan checklist.

Facilities Modifications/Enhancements and Available Supplies:

- Hand sanitation stations will be placed:
 - On the exterior side of all exterior access doors.
 - At each workstation
 - At strategic locations in common areas.
- Cleaning materials and supplies will be available in all shared workspaces and common areas.
- All exterior access doors to all facilities will remain locked at all times.
 - Doorbells will be installed at public entrances.
 - Where applicable, small package shipping and receiving boxes will be placed at public entrances.
- The number of chairs and workstations in shared workspaces will be adjusted according to the occupancy limits.
- Furniture in shared offices will be organized as required to maintain distancing.
- HVAC filters will be upgraded to HEPA or equivalent standard.
- To reduce droplet/aerosol movement, airflow deflectors will be placed on all forced air vents where airflow is upward.
- Floor markings will be used where applicable to serve as reminders for and support distancing protocols.
- Where distancing/separation is not possible or where visitors are first met, physical barriers will be installed, e.g.:
 - Public reception areas.
 - Shared workspaces where adequate ongoing distancing/separation is not possible.
- Where distancing/separation are not possible and where physical barriers are not in place, masks are required.
 - All staff will be provided with personal branded, reusable masks.
 - When in a situation where masks are required when interacting with the public, staff are encouraged to use their branded masks.
 - Staff are responsible for care and cleaning of their mask(s).
 - A supply of branded, reusable masks and disposable masks will be kept on site in locations accessible to visitors/guests and staff.
 - A secure container will be provided where disposable masks can be safely trashed.
 - Branded masks may be offered to some guests for promotional purposes. Guests may keep these masks when they leave the premises.
- Boot trays, coat hooks, clothes hangers will be removed from all entry areas.
 - These items will be added to all offices and outdoor clothes will be kept there.
- All dishware and cutlery will be removed from the kitchen:
 - Staff will be required to provide their own dishes and cutlery and keep them in their office.

Appropriate information will be provided or posted at key points to inform and remind staff and visitors of Covid-19 policies, practices, and procedures that are in place and required. For example:

- Do Not Enter poster:
 - All exterior entry doors in all buildings.
- Physical Distancing poster:
 - All exterior entry doors in all buildings.
 - Hallways
 - Common areas (e.g. shared offices, meeting rooms, kitchen, garage/storage bays).
- Physical Distancing floor markings:
 - Visitor reception areas.
 - Shipping/receiving areas.
 - Common areas (e.g. shared offices, meeting rooms, kitchen, garage/storage bays).
- Occupancy notices:
 - Individual room occupancy: at entry point for each room.
 - Vehicle occupancy: all vehicles and trailers.
- Handwashing poster:
 - All bathrooms.
 - Kitchen.
 - All vehicles and trailers.
- Cleaning and Disinfecting poster:
 - All rooms in all buildings.
 - All vehicles and trailers.
- Visitor procedures notice:
 - At public entrance exterior door.
- Shipping and Receiving notice:
 - At public entrance exterior door.
- Authorized personnel only beyond this point:
 - At all access points to property or buildings other than public entrance.

Where required, posters and notices will be accompanied by more specific and/or detailed information based on the applicable policies and procedures.

Illness and Exposure

If you have any illness or have had any potential exposure it is imperative you act immediately according to the guidelines below. Additionally, you should contact your supervisor as soon as possible. AvCan will endeavour to keep employees who are otherwise well enough working as much as possible during periods of self-isolation. This may involve reassigning or modifying duties. It may involve providing computers or other equipment to allow the employee to work from home.

Covid Cases

Any employee who has been diagnosed with an active case of Covid-19 must adhere to provincial health guidelines for self-isolation: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/if-you-are-sick>

Contact Tracing

Any employee who is contacted by their regional health authority through contact tracing must adhere to the directions given to them by the health authority for self-isolation: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation/contact-tracing>

General Sickness and Returning to Work

Employees who have any [symptoms](#), even mild ones, should use the self-assessment tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/> or <https://service.yukon.ca/en/covid-19-self-assessment/> and follow the advice given. Unless otherwise directed by a medical professional, the process will be as follows:

1. Immediately take steps to self-isolate.
2. Get a COVID-19 test.
3. If the test results are positive, follow provincial health guidelines for self-isolation with COVID-19.
4. If the test results are negative, continue to self-isolate until symptoms disappear.

Employees should self-assess as noted above before returning to work after an illness.

Employees should also self-assess as noted above before returning to work after an absence such as:

- Scheduled time off.
- Starting a new shift after a scheduled break from work.
- Blocks of time off working for another employer.
- Vacation.
- Leave of absence.

If in doubt, self-assess sooner rather than later and more rather than less.

Exposure

Any employee who believes they have experienced a high-risk exposure event, but has not been contacted by the regional health authority through contact tracing, should follow the process outlined below.

1. Follow regional health authority guidelines if they are posted for a specific high-risk exposure event. If no information is posted, take the following steps:
2. Immediately take steps to self-isolate.
3. Get a COVID-19 test.
4. If the test results are positive, follow provincial health guidelines for self-isolation with COVID-19.
5. If the test results are negative, and you are asymptomatic, you may return to work. If you have symptoms, continue to self-isolate until symptoms disappear.

Some examples of high-risk exposure events include:

- Exposure to somebody who has subsequently become sick, but is not necessarily known to have COVID-19.
- Being in a place or at an event with a confirmed case: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/public-exposures>
- Attendance at an indoor event or workplace situation where people interacted at close quarters and COVID-19 mitigation measures were not adhered to.

Physical Distancing and Personal Protective Equipment:

Physical distancing and/or separation and/or PPE according to current health agency or WorkSafeBC requirements is required. At the time of this writing, this means a minimum of two metres is required and physical separation barriers or masks must be used if two metres is not possible. This includes activities and interactions in:

- Offices.
- Shared workspaces or common areas.
- Meetings.
- Vehicles.

Occupancy Limits:

Occupancy of any room and any building as a whole if necessary, will be determined by current public health or WorkSafeBC recommendations or requirements. Occupancy plans can be found in the following documents:

- [Revelstoke Occupancy Plan](#)
- Add to this list of links to occupancy plans here when they are finalized.

Vehicle occupancy is also discussed in the Travel and Field trip sections.

Scheduling:

As much as possible, work schedules will be arranged to:

- Reduce the number of employees to the minimum required.
- Maintain room and building occupancy limits.
- Keep teams of people together as much as possible and limit team changes when possible.

Remote Work/Work From Home:

Anyone who prefers to not work in an office may request remote work or work from home options. These requests will be managed and granted on a case-by-case basis.

Employees who are restricted from accessing facilities may be required to work from home. See also Illness and Exposure section.

While AvCan cannot impose requirements on employees working from home or remotely, it's recommended that remote/home workers use this safety plan as guidance for applying reasonable and applicable protective measures in remote/work from home locations and workspaces.

Disinfecting Surfaces and Equipment:

Disinfecting is a team effort. AvCan will increase the building cleaning service (see Office Cleaning Protocol) schedule but staff need to play a role on a daily basis.

Effective disinfecting is a two-step process: cleaning and disinfecting. Surfaces must be cleaned of any debris or dirt before disinfecting. After cleaning, apply disinfectant to the surface and leave the disinfectant on for a specified amount of time as indicated by the product instructions.

Accepted cleaning substances

For cleaning, remove dust and debris using a dustpan and brush and/or a damp cloth. Make sure to disinfect the dustpan and brush after use and clean the cloth using soap and water or disinfectant.

For disinfecting, use a disinfectant solution provided by AvCan. Many types and brands of disinfectant are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19. A full list is maintained by Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html#tbl1>

During periods of extreme cold, it is possible that disinfectant solutions kept in vehicles or cold workspaces could freeze. It may be necessary to source a product that remains usable at low temperatures or else establish procedures to store cleaning products in a heated space prior to use.

Common Surfaces

Common surfaces (surfaces likely to be touched by others) need to be disinfected more frequently than personal surfaces (surfaces only you are likely to touch) to minimize the potential for virus transmission. Ideally, any surface you contact should be disinfected before it is touched by another person. Since this may not be practical in all circumstances, it is important to also practice regular handwashing (see handwashing policy).

The following guidance serves as a minimum expectation for cleaning and disinfecting common surfaces:

- Door knobs, light switches, alarm keypads, countertops, appliances, shared computers, shared desk space, printers and similar surfaces in high use areas should be cleaned and disinfected **twice per day**. Such areas include, but are not limited to:
 - Reception areas
 - Kitchens
 - Hallways
 - Shared offices
 - Bathrooms
 - Frequently used gear storage/change rooms
 - Frequently used garage/workshop/mailing spaces
- Equipment and appliances that are used intermittently, such as media equipment, tools, shared safety equipment, scanners and similar surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected **immediately after use** by the person who used them.
- Surfaces in low use areas should be cleaned and disinfected **once per day**.

Personal Surfaces

- Employees' personal desktop equipment and desk area should be cleaned and disinfected **once per day**.

Kitchen

- All staff are required to provide their own dishware and utensils. These are to be kept in a container in your office.
- Staff are encouraged to bring their own coffee/tea-making apparatus that can be kept in their own office.
- Staff are encouraged to bring food that requires a minimum of preparation and uses a minimum of shared kitchen appliances (e.g. fridge, microwave, toaster oven, etc.).
- No dishes, utensils, or personal coffee/tea apparatus may be left in the kitchen. These must be cleaned and removed to your office immediately after use.
- No common food items are allowed in the fridge e.g. condiments, beverages, etc.
- All personal items in the fridge:
 - Must be in a sealed container marked with the name of the owner.
 - Unopened beverages may be kept outside of a container but must be marked.
 - No items may be left overnight—all items must be removed from the fridge daily before you leave work.

Vehicles

See Field Programs section.

Office Cleaning Protocol

AvCan employs a cleaning contractor who will carry out a cleaning protocol twice a week. See Appendix B for the cleaning protocol checklist.

Handwashing

Hands should be washed regularly using soap and water or cleaned using an appropriate sanitizer product. Follow the procedures described on posters and notices or familiarize yourself with recommended procedures such as those provided by the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#).

Visitors and Guests:

Use of and access to AvCan facilities by non-staff should be eliminated when possible (e.g. meet by phone or online, use external package drops for small package shipping and receiving, etc.).

If non-staff must access AvCan facilities or operations, as much as possible they will be restricted to specific locations and activities to eliminate contact with staff whenever possible and if contact is necessary to minimize contact.

Whenever possible a public entrance will be designated for visitors and guests that is separate from a dedicated staff entrance.

Visitors who arrive uninvited or unannounced will be required to:

- Sanitize hands before entering.
- Ring the doorbell or call the reception number posted at the entrance to request entry.
- Be met at the designated public entrance by an employee who is wearing a mask.
- Remain in the reception area for service.
- Beyond the reception area, not enter any AvCan building, facility, or vehicle without approval from a supervisor or manager.
- If entry is approved, the visitor will be considered a guest (see following) and handled accordingly.

A guest is a non-staff person authorized to access an AvCan facility beyond the designated reception area.

- No unauthorized guests will be allowed. Anyone who arrives without an invitation or authorization will be treated as a visitor (see above).
- Authorized guests should be made aware in advance of safety policies and procedures they will be asked to adhere to. For example, by way of standard statement that can be emailed in advance or given to guests in person when they arrive.
- Upon arrival guests may ring the doorbell at the designated visitor entrance, call reception, or call the phone number of their AvCan contact to arrange entry.
- Guests will be required to wear a mask (AvCan will provide masks if needed) and complete a Covid-19 questionnaire before proceeding beyond the reception area.
- Employees must escort guests to an approved location where seating/positioning and/or activities will be designated.
- Upon departure, guests must be escorted to the appropriate exit by an employee.

Shipping and Receiving:

Small parcels

- Shippers receivers should not enter the building unless necessary.
- Packages will be dropped or picked up via an exterior drop box placed at the visitor entrance.
- For those requiring a signature or other in-person process the shipper/receiver will be treated as a visitor.

Large shipments

- Are handled using guest procedures.
- Access will be limited to storage bay areas.

Travel:

Non-Essential Travel

Until further notice, all non-essential travel is suspended. This includes travel by any means such as:

- AvCan vehicles.
- Personal vehicles.
- Public transit.
- Aircraft.
- Commercial ground transport.

Non-essential travel is travel that is not required to fulfil planned and scheduled operational goals and objectives and/or travel to carry out tasks or activities for which there are reasonable other means for accomplishing the task. Non-essential tasks or tasks that generally have an alternative to travel include (but are not limited to): meetings, conferences, or events that can be carried out online or remotely. If in doubt, contact a supervisor or manager to discuss the need for travel.

Local travel and travel for assigned field work are allowed, see following.

Any employee who has essential work-related travel must contact a supervisor or manager who will assess the need and, if travel is warranted, will develop written guidance for the trip. The supervisor will then submit the travel guidelines to the Executive Director who must approve all exemptions to the travel suspension.

Local Travel

Local travel (e.g. running errands in the town where a vehicle resides, taking a vehicle to a local shop for maintenance, etc.) is allowed under the following restrictions:

- One person per vehicle except if with a family member that resides in the same home.
- Vehicles must be cleaned/disinfected after use (see Disinfecting Surfaces and Equipment and Field Program cleaning sections) immediately after use.

A request for exceptions to the above restrictions should be taken to a supervisor, manager, or the Executive Director.

Field Programs and Field Travel

Field Program and Field Travel guidelines are covered in the Field Programs Protocols section of this plan.

Outreach, Education, and Awareness Activities

All formal indoor in-person AvCan outreach, education, and awareness events are suspended until further notice.

Requests for exceptions must be presented to the Executive Director. Any events granted an exception must have a safety plan that is approved in advance by the ED.

Outdoor outreach, education, and awareness activities with individuals or groups are not suspended but must be undertaken with care. The following should be considered the minimum procedures:

- Minimize group size: Smaller is better. The maximum group size will be the number used by applicable public health or worker safety agencies at the time of the event. [Click this link to check current requirements.](#)
- Not approaching the public without first establishing if anyone is ill or exhibiting symptoms.
- Ensuring everyone involved is aware of safety protocols they will be asked to use.
- Maintaining physical distance, minimum 2m.
- Use of masks if physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Youth Outreach, Education, and Awareness Activities:

School Presentations

British Columbia and Alberta schools have comprehensive plans in place for managing guest speakers in regards to Covid-19. AvCan will continue to monitor applicable Ministry of Health Covid-19 guidance for K-12 school settings in each province and adjust protocols accordingly. All schools will be given the choice of in-class, outdoor, or virtual delivery of programming. (See also Outreach, Education, and Awareness Activities section for additional guidance regarding outdoor activities).

All AvCan youth education staff and contractors will receive Covid-19 safety training prior to the start of their season.

In addition to the school's protocols, the following procedures will be followed by all AvCan Youth Education employees AND contractors:

- Avoid exposure to anyone with possible Covid-19 symptoms or anyone who has traveled outside of Canada for 14 days prior to school visits.
- Complete a self-assessment using the BC Covid-19 self-assessment tool the day of any scheduled school visits and present to schools virtually if they do not pass the screening.
<https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- Staff will travel alone between schools.
- Two metres distance must be kept between staff and all other persons at all times. If this is not possible, masks must be worn.
- Staff should avoid high touch surfaces as much as possible while in schools and wash hands immediately after touching high use surfaces. Additionally, staff should wash hands before and after each in-class or outdoor presentation.
- No Stickers or "Swag" will be handed out to students.
- No props or other equipment is to be passed around the classroom.
- Only equipment required for avalanche rescue practice will be distributed to students and must be disinfected before and after each use.

Tool Box Program

The increased focus on learning in an outdoor environment is creating a high demand for AvCan's tool box program. To administer this program safely during Covid-19, all teachers are required to follow Public Health Covid-19 guidance for K-12 School Settings provided by the Ministry of Health within their province. Additionally, AvCan requires all tool box users to adhere to the following protocols.

Teachers must sign and return a form agreeing to the following procedures as part of the tool box booking process or they will not receive a tool box.

- All equipment, including the box and locks, must be disinfected before and after every use. Tool boxes will be stocked with appropriate cleaning supplies.
- Students with potential Covid-19 symptoms will not be allowed to participate in training sessions or handle gear.

Field Programs Protocols

AvCan fieldwork is non-routine, highly contextual, and requires ongoing, dynamic risk assessment that takes into account public safety benefits and worker safety. While there are some firm “rules” in this section, it is understood that some flexibility may be required in certain instances to safely and effectively carry out field program public avalanche safety activities. AvCan asks employees to use a common sense approach, consider their own and their co-workers’ safety, consider the safety of the public, and be conservative if there’s any doubt as to whether an activity or task can be carried out safely.

Employees are encouraged to discuss ideas for improvements to these protocols with Forecasting Program Supervisors, the Warning Service Manager, the Executive Director, and/or the AvCan Joint Health and Safety Committee.

As with all aspects of the AvCan Covid-19 Safety Plan, employees should bring to a supervisor, manager, ED, or JHSC any information that suggests these protocols do not adhere to provincial orders, notices or guidelines and require updating.

Outdoor Field Work

In the backcountry, teams work outside in an environment that offers superior ventilation and good opportunities for social distancing. Providing guidance on how teams working in the field should interact with the public and each other to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission should allow us, with some reasonable modifications, to accomplish tasks that forward our public safety goals.

Physical distancing:

- Maintain minimum of 1 metre distance between individuals within work cohorts (more distance is preferred)
- Maintain minimum of 2 metre distance between workers and public

See also guidance in the Outreach, Education, and Awareness

Mask use in the field:

Appropriate Masks will be used when distancing can’t be maintained.

An appropriate mask is one designed for managing dispersion of the Covid virus. For example, the following is guidance from the WHO with regards to mask design: “Masks should be at least two layers with one layer a cotton or cotton blend.” Cotton/cotton blend masks intended for indoor use may not be appropriate or effective in harsh outdoor environments. A mask that meets the criteria for reducing dispersion but using materials suited for winter outdoor use is generally more appropriate for field programs outdoor use. Appropriate outdoor masks will be sourced by AvCan and provided to employees who work in the field.

Social Distancing: strategies for challenging situations

The table below outlines common situations with an increased potential for close contact in the course of outdoor field work together with mitigation strategies.

Situation	Solutions The general strategy is to slow down, analyze the situation, & act defensively to protect yourself.
Interfacing with public in parking lots or backcountry	Undertake with care maintaining 2 m spacing. For the public keen to talk and get closer, step back and be confident to ask for space if the message is not received.
Worker sled stuck	Use pull straps and take turns digging to maintain distance. If required to be close for a short exposure time, or use an appropriate mask.
Public sled stuck	If public can handle it on their own, let them do so. If assistance is required, use COVID questionnaire to choose appropriate PPE and follow worker sled stuck procedure. Public will also need to wear an appropriate mask for us to help.
First aid in field	See Covid-19 First Aid Protocols section.
Snow Study	Consider how distancing can be maintained while digging profiles. One person at the face, the other clearing snow a minimum metre behind, each facing the same way. Slow down to reduce exertion (increased breathing). One person doing layer id/tests and the other person recording a safe distance away. If for some reason close proximity is required for a short exposure time, use appropriate masks.
Backcountry cabins	Field teams should avoid public backcountry cabin day use unless it is empty or an emergency. If it is required to use a cabin with public in it, appropriate masks should be worn and exposure time limited.
Truck or Trailer problems (e.g. flat tire, stuck in the ditch)	Follow general strategy: slow down, assess, and develop a plan that adheres to Covid guidelines (e.g. distancing, mask use, etc.). If a public bystander offers assistance, slow down, revise the plan, and figure out whether and how to accept their offer.

Vehicle Use

Vehicle Occupancy & Practices

- AvCan vehicle occupancy limit: 2 (two).
 - Occupancy limits may change from time-to-time to reflect regional conditions, updated information or guidance, or to ensure compliance with provincial directives.
- Outside of an emergency situation, exceeding vehicle occupancy limits requires approval from your supervisor.
- When practical, workers may consider travelling alone in vehicles to maximize physical distancing, especially if not from the same cohort.
- Maintain physical distancing as much as possible.
 - In a vehicle with two rows of seating consider seating the passenger in the back seat on the opposite side of the driver.
- Use of an appropriate mask is required at all times.
- No eating in vehicles.
- Field teams cohorts, in the interest of minimizing competing risks (e.g. driver fatigue, team communications, additional eyes on the road), are likely to travel together in a single truck in the front seats under normal circumstances this winter.
 - When sitting side-by-side attend to effective front-to-back airflow. See Vehicle Ventilation section below.

Vehicle Ventilation

- Maximize fresh ventilation in vehicles by:
 - Never using “recirculated air”, always have fresh air intake open.
 - Maintain cabin airflow with the fan
 - Windscreen, dash, and floor vents should be kept open
 - Keep a window(s) open, even 10 cm, whenever possible

Distribution of Roles

- Consider having a single driver for the day so that staff can maintain the same position in the vehicle to and from the destination.
- If fatigue or other considerations don't allow for that, clean contact points before changing drivers.
- When possible, a single employee will fill out the truck log each day of the week.

Transporting a Sick Employee

If someone begins showing signs or experiencing symptoms consistent with Covid-19 during a trip, the destination and duration requires re-prioritizing.

Immediate steps include:

- Maximize social distancing (more than 2 m is better).
- Initiate PPE precautions (N95 masks, gloves, face shield).
- Contact your supervisor. (Do NOT delay transportation if there is urgency to the situation.)
- If transporting a symptomatic person is required:
 - cabin fan is turned on high,
 - cabin recirculation is turned off,
 - optimize horizontal front to back airflow by opening defrost and dash vents,
 - optimize airflow by opening windows,
 - presumptive Covid-19 worker rides in the backseat.

Thoroughly disinfect the vehicle immediately after use and again prior to reuse. Flag the vehicle and secure the keys until the vehicle is sanitized and cleared for operations.

Work with your supervisor to create a plan and determine next steps.

Vehicle Cleaning

- AvCan employees will wash or sanitize hands before loading/entering vehicles, and after unloading/exiting vehicles.
- Front and back seats should have their own hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and garbage receptacles.
- If necessary bring cleaning products inside overnight to avoid freezing.
- Staff should load and unload their own personal belongings.
- High-contact surfaces within the vehicle are cleaned at the start of each day and throughout the day whenever practical. These include:
 - Door handles
 - Handholds
 - Arm rests
 - Seat belts and buckles
 - Headrests
 - Steering wheel and dashboard controls
 - Ventilation grilles and knobs
 - Rear view mirrors
 - Navigational (GPS) and communication devices (radios and satellite phones).
- An alcohol-based cleaner or disinfecting wipes/spray and paper towels should be used.
- Immediately dispose of used cleaning supplies and PPE in designated containers.

Hotels & Accommodations

To reduce the risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 virus we recommend employees do not stay with friends or family members while travelling on Avalanche Canada business.

Seek to stay at professionally run accommodations. When making reservations or checking-in evaluate the operation. Consideration to assist this assessment include:

- Is there adherence to a robust COVID-19 safety plan for their workers?
- Are there enhanced cleaning and safety protocols in place?
- Is there a room latency policy (vacancy time between guests)?
- What are their protocols in public spaces and are they enforced?
- Is there a restaurant and an option for room service?

If upon arrival the accommodation is sub-standard, employees are empowered to find an alternative solution, even if there is a non-refundable charge for cancellation fee.

Single occupancy rooms will be provided to reduce exposure.

Backcountry cabins, hostels and similar dormitory style accommodation should be avoided. See North Rockies section (below) for more specific guidance regarding BC Parks Kakwa Cabin.

Consider accommodation with cooking facilities. Reducing the number of meals eaten at restaurants and food outlets could lower your overall exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Meals

When buying meals, seek professionally run restaurants and food outlets that adhere to a robust COVID-19 safety plan for their workers and have enhanced cleaning and safety protocols in place. Assess conditions that affect social distancing (2 metres), for example look at table spacing, consider time of day and avoid times when it's busy and rooms are at or near occupancy limits.

Eating at establishments with fresh-air ventilation, or even eating outside, reduces exposure.

Consider take-out and eating elsewhere (e.g. at your hotel).

Consider buying groceries and preparing meals in your accommodation (e.g. hotel room with cooking facilities).

If eating inside with other public, "ceiling-to-floor" airflow is preferred; avoid horizontal airflow (other people's air blowing into your face). If dining in, restaurants (where alcohol is a secondary service) should be used whenever possible. Dining in bars (where alcohol plays a larger role) should only be considered when other options are not available.

Field Offices

Field Offices in Fernie, Prince George, and Yukon may present program specific risks and mitigations.

Field office mitigation practices include:

- Each team member will pack and unpack their own gear for the day.
- Consider assigning shared equipment like InReach, Sat Phone, first aid kits, etc. for the week to limit mixing, then cleaning them when put on away for days off.
- Assign VHF / FRS radios and transceivers to each individual for the season.
- Separate lockers or hanging space for personal field equipment to reduce mixing.
- Only plug in boot dryer before leaving, and turn it off first thing upon return in the morning.

North Rockies (BC Parks Office & Compound)

Follow BC Parks Covid protocols when in compound and office areas. Be sensitive to the likelihood that BC Parks worker cohorts are not our cohort -- stricter guidelines may apply to us as AvCan employees.

Kakwa Provincial Park Ranger Cabin

Under current British Columbia Phase 3 guidelines (September, 2020) AvCan field teams will not use the Kakwa Ranger Cabin. Recognizing the cabin is not a public space and that AvCan field teams are likely able to remain within their worker cohort, this guidance may be revised at a later date if/when BC Covid-19 guidelines change or new Covid-19 safety knowledge is available.

Yukon Field Office (Fraser Camp)

Follow Yukon Government protocols when in compound and office areas. Be sensitive to the likelihood that YTG cohorts are not our cohort -- stricter guidelines may apply to us as AvCan employees.

In addition to following protocols, discuss with both foreman and cook whether there are informal practices we should follow, for example eating meals in shifts rather than together with highway maintenance crews.

First Aid Protocols

This section of AvCan's Covid-19 Safety Plan provides guidance for managing first aid treatment during the Covid 19 pandemic. Additional training and practice time will be provided to field staff as part of Warning Service fall training or during field program set-up.

Avalanche Canada employees are not search and rescue specialists and are not required to respond to public first aid callouts as part of their work duties. However, employees may be called upon to administer first aid to an injured co-worker and if it can be done safely, AvCan employees may offer assistance to others in the backcountry if they come upon an emergency.

Details relevant to equipment AvCan staff do not carry in the backcountry have been omitted; e.g. things like oxygen and bag valve mask use. That equipment would arrive on scene with a SAR response and trained personnel who will be operating under safety protocols established for SAR teams..

Treating Workers

Employees must pass a [self-screening checklist](#) before commencing a shift (see General Sickness and Returning to Work section) and are considered a low risk patient with respect to Covid. If a fellow employee who has passed the screening requires first aid:

- If worker is alert and oriented and has a minor injury that doesn't require any critical interventions; maintain physical distancing while attendant provides directions and supplies for subject to treat themselves
- If the worker requires direct care, the attendant will use appropriate PPE for the situation.
 - Appropriate mask
 - Eye protection (goggles or sunglasses are acceptable)
 - Gloves
 - Patient should also don a mask or face shield
- If possible, a single attendant will complete the primary survey allowing other helpers to maintain physical distancing. Attendant may need to consider:
 - Using objects to stabilize head (if c-spine)
 - Using an oropharyngeal airway when appropriate so hands can be free
 - Using patient positioning for airway if non-spine
- If help is needed for packaging, have helpers use winter PPE (appropriate mask, winter gloves and so on) and assign them lower extremities.
- If a worker requires CPR, they automatically will fall into the high risk category regardless if they self-screened before work as CPR is an aerosolizing procedure.
- If CPR is required, continuous CPR at a rate of 100 compressions per minute is recommended. If there is more than one trained rescuer with PPE, change places for performing compressions approximately every minute.
- Bag Valve Mask (and two trained attendants) is required for ventilations; pocket mask is not adequate. No ventilations with CPR until BVM arrives with SAR attendants.

Treating Public

If AvCan staff are helping in a public first aid scenario, a COVID [screening questionnaire](#) should be used. An [Infectious Disease Rapid Assessment](#) algorithm can then be used to help determine what PPE should be worn. Copies of these will be added to team field books.

If the answer to any of the screening questions is YES or the answers are unknown, full PPE should be used. This would include an N95 mask as well as eye protection, gloves, and Gore-Tex (or equivalent).

Once PPE is in place First Aid procedures described above (Treating Workers section) may be undertaken.

Proper donning and doffing and disposal techniques should be used with PPE. Cleaning hands before and after dealing with a subject is required.

- [Donning and doffing gloves and N95](#)
- [Doffing Gore-Tex gear](#)

Equipment needed:

- 1x N95 mask for each first aid attendant (foldable preferred)
- Disposable surgical style masks (carry a couple in field for subjects)
- Disposable face shields
- Appropriate masks for field workers
- Box of disposable gloves (correct size for workers)
- Portable hand sanitizer for field

References:

[OFA Protocols for Covid](#)

[Donning and doffing PPE resources](#)

[How to wear a non-medical mask-video](#)

[Infectious Disease Rapid Assessment](#)

[Respiratory Symptom and Exposure Questionnaire](#)

Appendix A: Covid Safety Plan Training Checklists

The following topics will be presented to staff using the information from appropriate sections of the Covid-19 Safety Plan to provide details. All staff members will be required to attend basic training. Any staff who will go into the field or work in field programs will be required to attend a field program training in addition to basic training.

Covid 19 Safety: Basic Training - All Staff

Date	Trainer	Employee	Topic	Comments
			Location of/access to the safety plan.	
			Right to refuse unsafe work.	
			Procedures for bringing up concerns.	
			Signs of illness.	
			Before coming to work.	
			Remote work options.	
			Access to facilities.	
			Personal effects (clothes/shoes/etc.).	
			Handwashing.	
			Cleaning and disinfecting.	
			Occupancy and distancing.	
			Shared offices..	
			Shared workstations.	
			Food, drink, and kitchen procedures.	
			Visitors and guests.	
			Shipping and receiving.	

Covid 19 Safety: Field Program Training - Field Staff

Date	Trainer	Employee	Topic	Comments
			Vehicle occupancy and distancing.	
			Vehicle use.	
			Vehicle cleaning.	
			Accommodation.	
			Meals.	
			Field offices (specific to program).	
			Stuck vehicles, trailers, sleds..	
			Interactions with public.	
			Snow study.	
			Covid considerations for Emergency Response Plan	

Appendix B: Office Cleaning Checklist

The following checklist is used in the Revelstoke office. It serves as a template for field program offices where needs and requirements may be different. For example, in some cases AvCan field programs rent or use space owned and operated by other agencies who will have cleaning protocols in place. When field program offices are established, cleaning protocols will be revisited and specific protocols for those offices will be established and documented here.

Bi Weekly Cleaning 2 with 2 cleaners

Vital Oxide cleaner to be used throughout the facility to sanitize and disinfect.

Entrances:

- Spot clean windows and walls
- Clean and disinfect alarm keypads
- Sanitize phones, countertops, light switches, doors, and handles
- Clean office equipment
- Dust all ledges
- Collect garbage
- Vacuum floors (move furniture)
- Wet wipe furniture
- Sanitize stairwell and railings

Offices:

- Spot clean windows and walls
- Sanitize Phones, desktops, light switches, doors and handles
- Clean entire desks moving items, cleaning items, cleaning underneath, dry! And replace.
- Clean office equipment
- Clean computers including monitors, keyboards, and hard drives
- Dust from top to bottom and behind
- Collect garbage
- Vacuum floors (move furniture)

Kitchen:

- Sanitize countertops and cabinets
- Clean Microwave
- Clean Fridge if necessary
- Clean dishes (Communal dishes should not be left in sink but in case they are clean and put away)
- Clean Sinks
- Dust
- Restock paper and soap products
- Collect garbage
- Vacuum and Mop Floors

Bathrooms x 3:

- Sanitize entire bathroom
- Clean mirrors
- Restock paper and soap products
- Collect Garbage
- Vacuum and Mop Floors

Boardroom:

- Sanitize Phone, desktop, light switches and door handles
- Clean chairs when necessary
- Collect Garbage
- Vacuum Floor when necessary

Garbage:

Garbage should be bagged and placed in basement by entrance for removal by staff.