

# Industrial Camps Order – Silviculture Briefing Document

## Western Forestry Contractors Association

### BC SAFE Forestry Program

On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Provincial Health Office released the following bulletin related to practices for industrial camps, including remote silviculture operations in both motels and bush camps. The new order is based on the province moving into Phase 3 of their COVID-19 management plan, and the wider opening of businesses and public activity this summer.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-industrial-camps.pdf>

**This bulletin is provided to help silviculture companies adjust their operations following this new order, and to explain to their workers how the new order affects existing communicable disease prevention plans. A few key points should be explained to all staff as part of this discussion.**

- This order is specific to BC only and may not impact practices or standards in any other Province.
- The new order provides instructions for how workers shall protect themselves when leaving their company-provided accommodation (motels and camps) to visit public spaces.
- Workers **MUST** self-monitor for signs and symptoms of illness on a continual basis and **MUST** carry masks or tissues whenever they leave their company-provided accommodation.
- The new order re-affirms pre-existing guidelines related to COVID-19 management plans, OHS coordinators, management of symptomatic workers, and other practices.
- The original guidelines for silviculture operations **STILL** remain in place as a guide for best practices. While those guidelines do not impose strict restrictions on worker movement, they still outline effective ways of reducing the risk of infections entering and spreading within crews. It is the WFCA's advice that crews continue to follow those original guidelines and best practices as best as they can, including minimizing exposure between crews and communities.
- The new order does not explicitly support workers leaving camps to visit nearby towns, but instead provides some basic precautionary steps to guide this activity if it occurs. Workers should be aware that contact with the public continues to pose a significant risk to the health and success of their crew, and it may be appropriate for workers to take more precautions than other people to preserve the COVID-free status of their workplace. This may mean wearing masks in public, more frequent hand-washing, appropriate physical distancing, and avoiding crowded areas where infection is more likely.
- Workers should be strongly urged to avoid areas where alcohol is served, such as bars and pubs and restaurants, as people tend to be more relaxed with their habits in such places and the risk of infection may be higher. Providing meal service on days off may be important for reducing

such risks and carry-out dining should be preferred over dine-in whenever restaurant visits cannot be avoided.

- Providing meal-services on days off has been a central part of the success in preventing COVID-19 risks and reducing trips to town. This service continues to be part of the best practice guidelines for silviculture operations.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is NOT over, and recent outbreaks in other areas and the influx of travellers to our region means that risk of infection may likely rise in the coming weeks.
- Crews that have relaxed some of their distancing and prevention habits INSIDE their operations, must understand that they must exercise more caution and be more careful in public areas where there are fewer controls over hygiene. In short, workplace complacency could become a serious risk if it carries over to public areas.
- If staff do visit nearby communities and businesses, it may be appropriate to re-implement precautionary measures INSIDE the workplace, such as reduced worker-pod sizes, increased physical distancing, and meal-shifts.
- Employers continue to be responsible for deciding the precautionary measures that apply to the workplace, regardless of what occurs in public. This includes taking steps to reduce risk of COVID transmission in camps, and in company vehicles that may be used to visit nearby communities. While the order does not explicitly prevent workers from traveling to nearby communities, it is still within the employers right to impose restrictions on access to the camp and work site (such as quarantining or increased isolation measures) if they feel proper protocols have not been observed.
- Employers should consult with Joint OHS Committee and worker safety representatives as they make changes to safety measures in the workplace so that proper input is gathered -and considered in this process.
- Both workers and employers share an interest in finishing the 2020 work season without any cases of COVID-19. The success of the industry this year will likely shape opportunities in future seasons.

Employers and workers need to work together to adjusting to Phase 3 while still maintaining a focus on the successful completion of their season. They should discuss the previous points together as they decide how to best protect themselves from COVID-19