



Touchstone Family Association's COVID-19 Safety Plan

June 2020 (Updated November 25, 2020)

Introduction

Touchstone Family Association has been operational as an essential service provider from the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic making the necessary adjustments and precautions to continue operating during this unprecedented time.

It is important to note that while Touchstone has remained fully operational throughout the pandemic, other social service providers and businesses have not. As the Province moves to restart parts of the economy, it is important to recognize that reopening of previously shuttered businesses and public facilities, will produce an uptick in the mobility of the general population, including clients who make use of our services and supports. This increased mobility may pose new and greater risks.

Therefore it is important for Touchstone Family Association to have in place a well-defined Safety Plan that addresses industry-specific risk factors and how they will be addressed. The introduction of new protocols and procedures, based on input from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Work Safe BC, Touchstone's Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), agency staff and contracting partners, will help ensure our Association continues to safely support clients.

Developing a Covid-19 Safety Plan

In compliance with Work Safe BC and the PHO, employers are required to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines and procedures they have put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Any plan must be grounded in health and safety considerations with the goal of protecting those in the workplace from the spread of COVID-19 now and into the future. Touchstone has continually assessed risk throughout this pandemic, to provide continuous support to clients.

The following six step process was adapted from the **Work Safe BC Guidelines**.

STEP 1: Assess the risks at your workplace

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways. It can spread in droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your face.

The risk of person-to-person transmission increases the closer you come to other people, the more time you spend near them, and the more people you come near.

The risk of surface transmission increases when many people contact the same surface and when those contacts happen over short periods of time.

- ✓ Touchstone has identified areas where there may be risks, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. The closer together staff and/or clients are and the longer they are close to each other, the greater the risk.
- ✓ Touchstone has involved Staff, Managers, and the Joint Health and Safety Committee in our ongoing assessment of risk.
- ✓ Touchstone identified areas where people gather, such as lunch room and group meeting rooms.
- ✓ Touchstone has identified job tasks and processes where staff are close to one another or members of the public and/or clients. This includes the use of Association fleet vehicles.
- ✓ Touchstone has identified the equipment that staff share while working.
- ✓ Touchstone has identified surfaces that people touch often, such as doorknobs, faucets and light switches.

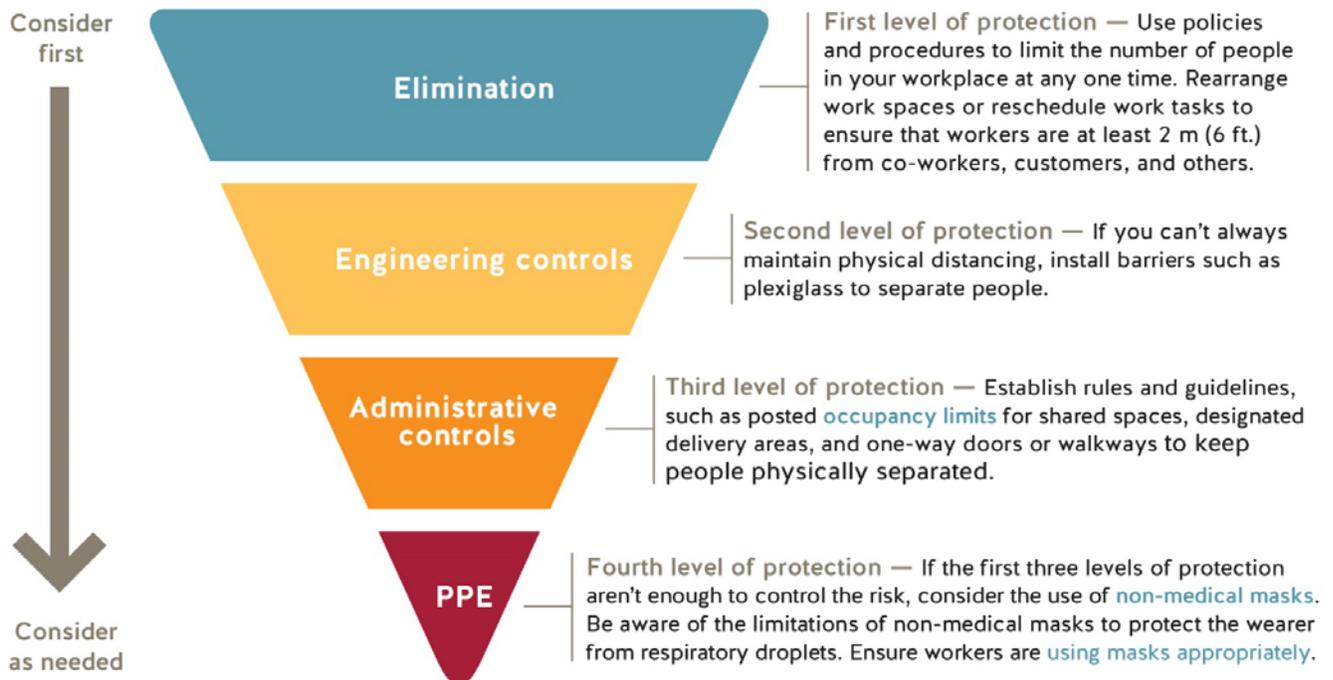
STEP 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

Touchstone has implemented protocols to minimize the risks of transmission. We looked to the following for information, input, and guidance:

- ✓ Industry-specific protocols on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) to determine whether any are relevant to our Association (see protocols for: **In-person Counselling, Offices**).
- ✓ Staff, Managers, and the Joint Health and Safety Committee.
- ✓ Orders, guidance, and notices issued by the Provincial Health Officer specific to our industry.
- ✓ Contracting partners (MCFD), Licensing-specific protocols for the Francis House Residential Program.

Reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets in the air, implement protocols to protect against your identified risks. Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible, use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection. Consider controls from additional levels if the first level isn't practicable or does not completely control the risk. You might likely need to incorporate controls from various levels to address the risk at your workplace.



First Level Protection (Elimination): Limit the number of people at the workplace and ensure physical distance whenever possible

- ✓ Touchstone has established and posted an occupancy limit for our premises.
- ✓ In order to reduce the number of people at the worksite, Touchstone has implemented work-from-home arrangements, virtual meetings, rescheduling work tasks, and limiting the number of clients and visitors in the office space.
- ✓ Touchstone has established and posted occupancy limits for common areas such as the staff kitchen and washrooms.
- ✓ Touchstone has implemented measures to keep individuals at least 2 metres apart, wherever possible.

Outlined below are specific measures Touchstone has taken to ensure Physical Distancing:

- Establishing a work-from-home schedule, which allows staff to work approximately 50% of their work schedule at home. Days of in-office work alternate between staff, to keep the number of staff in-office to a minimum on any given day. Each work day there are 20 (or under) total staff and practicum students onsite, spread out over two floors. This work schedule was implemented at the end of March 2020, and will remain in place until further notice from the PHO.
- In the creation of the above schedule, staff groupings were put in place, to have the same set of staff working together on select days to help limit the total number of contacts.
- Occupancy limit signs are posted at the entrances for both suites (108 & 210) as well as in the staff kitchen and shared office spaces in Suite 108.
- At minimum, twice daily counts at random times are taken of the number of staff, clients and visitors on site to ensure our occupancy limits are maintained. This is documented at reception and reviewed daily.
- The building's management company (Concert), has reconfigured the communal washroom spaces throughout the building, to limit users to one individual at a time, with clearly labelled lock indicators (Vacant/Occupied) signage.
- By switching to an online platform (Zoom- for Health Care) staff are able to continue to work with clients remotely, again, limiting the number of face to face encounters and the need for clients to attend sessions in office. * It is important to note, that any client in need of in-person support, who is displaying no symptoms of a cold or flu, will continue to be supported in-person.
- Clients in need of in-person support, are still seen by TFA staff, but in larger offices/conference rooms, which allow for maximum space between staff and clients. Rooms are cleaned pre and post client visits.
- When possible, clients will be seen outdoors, to allow for greater social distancing.
- Any client entering Touchstone's space must be pre-screened over the phone by their counsellor and then again upon arrival. Procedures are in place with Reception to ask clients a series of 3 questions regarding COVID-19. If a client identifies or appears to have symptoms, and/or identifies possible exposure to someone effected by COVID-19, staff will ask the client to leave and will either reschedule at a later date, or encourage program participation via the online platform.
- Only those clients in need of counselling/support are asked to attend in-person sessions. This eliminates extra visitors being onsite. Clients are asked to arrive just prior to the start of their session/program and staff are to meet them at the doors for the screening process.

- The use of Touchstone fleet vehicles (vans) help increase the social distance between staff and client, when clients are seated in the rear row seating. Staff are to limit the number of clients they transport at one time to support social distancing while driving.
- Staff meetings and large TFA group programs are being hosted on an online platform, eliminating the need for large numbers of people in the same space at the same time. Any group that is in-person, will have a decreased number of participants, be hosted in a large, ventilated space, and participants will be required to wear masks.
- Floor Markers have been placed on the floor outside of Suite 210's main door and throughout the main entrance hallway to highlight social distancing while entering the office space.
- Floor Markers have also been placed throughout Suite 108, to highlight the need for social distancing in open, shared spaces.

Second Level Protection (Engineering): Barriers and partitions

- ✓ Touchstone has installed barriers where workers can't keep physically distant from co-workers, clients, or other visitors.
- ✓ Touchstone has included barrier cleaning in our cleaning protocols.
- ✓ Touchstone's office space is engineered in a way to create barriers, allowing individuals to safely work/visit.

Outlined below are specific measures Touchstone has in place in terms of Engineering:

- The design of Touchstone's office space provides natural barriers to promote social distancing, with 26 individual office spaces and 2 large board rooms. With reduced numbers of staff and clients on the premises at one time, there is ample space for individuals to be naturally spread out and protected within the confines of a private office space.
- Staff and students who typically work at open work stations, are able to book and use any of the open office/board room spaces to work in.
- Plexi-glass partition screens have been installed in the reception area, creating a barrier between staff and any visitor entering through the office main door. The reception area, including the plexi-glass screens are cleaned twice daily by staff.
- Plexi-glass partitions have been installed around the work stations of the Youth Team to add an extra barrier in the open group area.

- A designated drop-box has been placed outside the main door of Suite 210, for mail delivery, and packages, thereby limiting additional traffic through the office space. Signage has also been placed at the front door, indicating that packages can be left at the door, without entry into the office suite.

Third Level Protection (Administrative): Rules and Guidelines

- ✓ Touchstone has identified rules and guidelines for how staff should conduct themselves.
- ✓ Touchstone has clearly communicated these rules and guidelines to workers through a combination of shared readings/emails, training and signage.

Outlined below are specific measures Touchstone has in place in terms of Rules and Guidelines:

- Touchstone Family Association has a Pandemic Exposure Control Plan with regards to COVID-19. This was shared with all agency staff members, who were then asked to sign off that they had reviewed the response plan. This plan is posted in a common area, easily accessible to staff.
- The Francis House Residential Program has an industry specific Pandemic Response Plan with regards to COVID-19. This was shared with all residential program staff, who were then asked to sign off that they had reviewed the response plan. This plan is posted in a common area, easily accessible to staff.
- Daily Vancouver Coastal Health updates are shared with staff via email regarding COVID-19. Any other relevant emails with regards to the pandemic are shared via email and/or posted in the staff kitchen.
- A "COVID-19" resource folder has been established on the Shared Server. This folder is updated by staff and management with relevant information regarding Covid-19. This folder includes general information about the global pandemic, but also information about community resources available to support clients in need.
- Signage has been placed around the office, as well as in the Association's fleet vehicles, regarding proper hand sanitation, the proper use of masks, and screening for symptoms. Signage is updated as new information becomes available through Vancouver Coastal Health, Work Safe BC and the Provincial Health Officer.
- Staff review the Association's policy and procedures annually, which includes a review of the Health and Safety Manual. The Health and Safety Manual outlines a number of key guidelines with regards to Universal Precautions (i.e. hand hygiene, cold and flu etiquette). Staff then receive competency based testing following the review to ensure understanding of the Association's policies.

- Any staff member displaying symptoms of a cold/flu are instructed to stay home. This also includes staff who have come in confirmed contact with someone with COVID-19. As essential service providers, Touchstone staff are able to receive COVID-19 testing, without a doctor's referral, at one of the many testing centres located throughout the province. Staff are not to return to work until they are symptom free.
- Any staff members traveling outside of the country are required to self-quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to work.

Fourth Level Protection: Using Masks

- ✓ Touchstone recognizes the importance of mask use to help protect against the spread of Covid-19.
- ✓ Touchstone understands that masks should always be used when other control measures cannot be implemented (i.e. in closed, confined spaces)
- ✓ Touchstone trained staff in the proper use of masks and provided both reusable and disposable masks to all staff.

Outlined below are specific measures Touchstone has in place in terms of Using Masks:

- As per the Provincial Health Order (PHO), mask use is now required in Touchstone's office spaces:

"Masks are required in all workplaces for shared work areas and areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained." PHO November 19, 2020

Staff and visitors are required to wear a mask in the hallways, kitchens, and gathering areas (i.e. group room) when more than 4 people are present. Staff are not required to wear a mask in their own office space. Those working in open areas are required to wear a mask when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Signage is posted throughout the office space promoting this practice.

- As per the PHO, the building's management company Concert has implemented mandatory mask use throughout all common areas of the building. Signage has been placed on the building's front entrance outlining this practice.
- Staff are to wear masks in all situations where proper social distancing cannot be attained (less than two meters, while driving clients, etc.).
- When accessing community spaces while on duty, staff are to follow the mask policy as set out by these locations.

- Signage is placed around the office and in the Association’s fleet vehicles about how to properly use/wear a mask.
- Disposable masks are available for all clients/visitors entering Touchstone’s office space.

Reduce the risk of surface transmission through effective Cleaning and Hygiene Practices

- ✓ Touchstone has reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.
- ✓ Touchstone has enough hand washing/sanitizing facilities on site for all our staff and clients.
- ✓ Touchstone has policies that specify when staff must wash their hands and we have communicated good hygiene practices to staff. Frequent handwashing and good hygiene practices are essential to reduce the spread of the virus.
- ✓ Touchstone has implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces — e.g., washrooms, equipment, vehicle interiors, shared tables, desks, light switches, and door handles. This includes the frequency that these items must be cleaned (number of times per day) as well as the timing.
- ✓ Touchstone staff who are cleaning have adequate materials.
- ✓ Touchstone has removed unnecessary items around the office space to simplify the cleaning process.

Outlined below are specific measures Touchstone has in place in terms of Cleaning & Hygiene:

- Touchstone receives a thorough cleaning of the entire office space, 5 nights a week (Monday-Friday) by contracted cleaning professionals.
- In addition to this, Touchstone’s Management team has implemented a twice daily cleaning/disinfecting schedule of high-touched areas around the office. This includes, but is not limited to: door knobs, light switches, bathroom countertops, faucets, communal office equipment, reception wait area, etc.
- Any room utilized by staff and clients is cleaned following use.
- All large group meeting rooms are equipped with their own set of cleaning supplies.
- Cleaning products, masks and gloves are placed around the office space for staff/client use, as well as in the Association’s fleet vehicles.

- A glove, mask and hand sanitizing station has been placed at the front entrance of each suite, for use by any individual as they enter Touchstone’s office space.
- Wall mounted hand sanitizer stations are located at two separate locations in Suite 210. Stations have also been mounted throughout 3031 Viking Way, by the building’s management company, Concert.
- Signage has been placed around the office, as well as in the Association's fleet vehicles, regarding proper hand sanitation, the proper use of masks, and screening for symptoms. Signage is updated as new information becomes available through Vancouver Coastal Health, Work Safe BC and the Provincial Health Officer.

STEP 3: Develop policies

Touchstone has developed the necessary policies and procedures to manage the workplace, including staff daily health screens, policies around who can be at the workplace, how to address illness that arises at the workplace, and how staff/clients can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions.

- As per the Provincial Health Order (PHO), Touchstone Family Association has implemented **Daily Health Screens** of all staff prior to entering the office space:

“Employers must ensure that every worker performs a daily health check before entering the workplace. Health checks are mandatory self-assessments conducted by workers and includes confirming with their employer, in written or verbal format, that they have reviewed the complete list of entry requirements and that none of the prohibited criteria apply to them.” Worksafe BC, November 2020

Staff are to review the 4 daily health screen questions (see Staff Daily Health Check Document) prior to the start of their on-site work day. Staff must then email Reception BEFORE coming to the office, answering “No to all 4 questions.” Staff do not need to include any personal medical information in this screening process. If a staff is unable to answer No to all 4 questions, they are instructed to contact their direct supervisor for next steps, as they will not be permitted to enter the workplace that day.

- Touchstone procedures ensure that staff and clients showing symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from the workplace. Signage is posted indicating, individuals should not enter the work place if they:
 - ◆ Have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days
 - ◆ Have been identified by Public Health as a close contact of someone with Covid-19
 - ◆ Have been told to isolate by Public Health
 - ◆ Are displaying any of Covid-related symptoms (new or worsening). Symptoms include: Fever or chills, cough, loss of sense of smell or taste, difficulty breathing, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue or tiredness, headache, body aches, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

- Visitors are prohibited or limited to community partners involved in client care (i.e. Social Workers) or maintenance/service providers (i.e. Building's engineer) in the Touchstone workplace.
- Touchstone has a working alone policy in place.
- Touchstone has work-from-home procedures in place.
- Touchstone staff receive annual Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training to address the risk of violence that may arise as clients and other members of the public adapt to restrictions or modifications to Association procedures.

Touchstone has procedures in place in the event a staff member starts to feel ill at work:

- Sick staff should report to their program director, even with mild symptoms.
- Sick staff will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands, be provided with a mask, and isolated. The staff member will be asked to go straight home.
- If the staff member is severely ill (e.g., difficulty breathing, chest pain), emergency services will be contacted.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces that the ill staff has come into contact with.
- Encourage the staff member to get tested for COVID-19 and report results back to their program director.

STEP 4: Develop communication plans and training

Touchstone must ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves safe while at our agency.

- Touchstone staff review Association policy and procedures annually, via competency testing.
- All staff are aware of policies for staying home when sick.
- Touchstone has posted signage throughout the office, including occupancy limits and effective hygiene practices.
- Touchstone has posted signage at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises, including visitors and staff with symptoms.

STEP 5: Monitor your workplace and update your plans as necessary

Things may change as Touchstone continues to operate throughout the pandemic. If the Association encounters a new area of concern, or if it seems like something isn't working, steps will be taken to update our policies and procedures.

- Touchstone is continually monitoring risk and we make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.
- Touchstone staff are aware that Joint Health and Safety Committee and the Management Team are available to address any issues with health and safety concerns.
- When resolving safety issues, Touchstone may consult the Joint Health and Safety Committee, Management, Staff, Contractors, Community Partners and/or clients for collaborative input.

STEP 6: Assess and address risks from resuming operations

Touchstone Family Association continues to operate throughout the global pandemic.

Never closing services, but adapting our approach, allowed our agency to continue supporting clients in these vulnerable times.

Our current approach to working with clients both in-person and remotely, with strict safety protocols in place, will continue until further notice/direction from the Provincial Health Officer.

***Touchstone Family Association acknowledges this is a working document, and our Safety Plan will be updated as needed.**

Updates Made:

- **July 2020**
- **October 2020**
- **November 2020**

Supporting Documents:

- Touchstone Family Association Pandemic Exposure Control Plan
- Touchstone Family Association Health and Safety Manual
- Touchstone Family Association Policy & Procedures Manual
- Work Safe BC Document: COVID-19 Safety Plan
- Work Safe BC Document: Community Social Services (non-residential) and COVID-19 Safety
- Work Safe BC Document: In-person Counselling: Protocols for returning to operation
- Work Safe BC Document: Offices: Protocols for returning to operation
- Touchstone Staff Daily Health Check Screening Questionnaire