



Touchstone Family Association's COVID-19 Safety Plan Francis House Residential Program

June 2020 (Updated November 25, 2020)

Introduction

Touchstone Family Association, including the **Francis House Residential Program**, 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 residents of Francis House. This increased mobility may pose new and greater risks.

Therefore it is important for Touchstone Family Association to have in place a well-defined Residential 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, contracting partners, and Licensing (VCH) will help ensure our Residential Program continues to safely support youth in our care.

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 **Francis House Pandemic Preparedness & Response Plan** is a comprehensive document that outlines the residential program's detailed response to COVID-19. The following six step process, adapted from the Work Safe BC Guidelines, serves as a supplement to that document.

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.

- ✓ Francis House has identified areas where there may be risks, either through close physical proximity or through contaminated surfaces. The closer together staff and/or residents are and the longer they are close to each other, the greater the risk.
- ✓ Francis House has involved staff, managers, and the Joint Health and Safety Committee in our ongoing assessment of risk.
- ✓ Francis House has identified areas where residents gather, such as the kitchen and shared living spaces.
- ✓ Francis House has identified job tasks and processes where staff are close to one another or members of the public and/or residents. This includes the use of FH van.
- ✓ Francis House has identified the equipment that staff/residents share.
- ✓ Francis house has identified surfaces that people touch often, such as doorknobs, faucets and light switches.

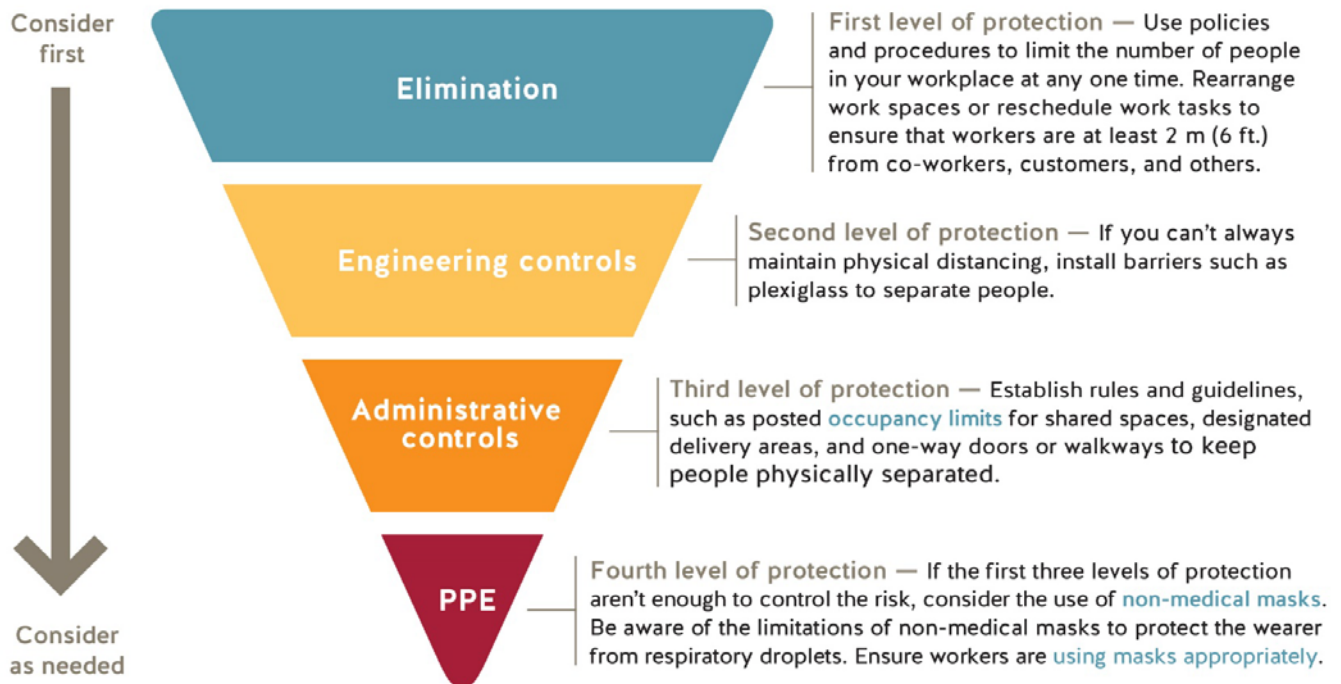
STEP 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

Francis House 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: **Community Social Service (residential) and COVID-19 Safety**).
- ✓ 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

Outlined below are specific measures Francis House has taken with regards to Physical Distancing:

- Visitors to Francis House are restricted to immediate Family Members. Family visits take place in either the backyard or in the large meeting room in the basement to allow for maximum distance between individuals.
- The number of staff attending the bi-monthly Staff meeting has been reduced, by having staff phone in remotely who are not on shift.
- All visitors to Francis House are screened prior to entry.
- All deliveries are to be left outside the front door of the residence, eliminating the need for visitors to enter the premises. Signage is posted outside the front door with instructions.
- Residents involved with other professionals engage with those professionals using an online platform, eliminating the need for face-to-face encounters.

- All schooling is done at home (none of the residents returned to in-class learning in June 2020) to limit contact exposure.
- Francis House residents and staff are encouraged to avoid close greetings like hugs, high fives, handshakes, etc. and maintain a distance of 2 metres from one another whenever possible.
- Staff encourage and support residents to maintain physical distance from other individuals, except for their immediate family members.
- Furniture layout has been rearranged to promote physical distancing.
- Staff and youth are to wear masks when in the program vehicle.
- Staff and youth are to wear masks when in public places and/or on outings.
- Staff will wear masks during shift change or use a larger office for better distancing.
- Staff and youth will social distance as much as possible in the common areas, including the kitchen table and living room.

Second Level Protection (Engineering): Barriers and partitions

As a residential program, the installation of barriers and partitions is not relevant to Francis House programming.

The residence is sufficient in size, and with a maximum of 5 residents at any one time, allows residents to easily social distance from one another, in open areas and their own private rooms.

Third Level Protection (Administrative): Rules and Guidelines

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

Outlined below are specific measures Francis House 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.
- Only one designated staff member completes all the grocery shopping for the house.

- The Francis House program is limiting the use of relief staff who have other, high-risk employment.
- 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 house 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.
- 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 (optional measure in addition to other control measures)

- ✓ Francis House understands the limitations of masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets.
- ✓ Francis House understands that masks should only be considered when other control measures cannot be implemented.
- ✓ Francis House staff are trained in the proper use of masks.

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

- The use of a personal mask at Francis House, is at the discretion of the individual worker, when no outbreak is present, however it is strongly encouraged.
- Staff are to wear masks in all situations where proper social distancing cannot be attained (less than two meters, while driving clients, etc.).

- Signage is placed around the house and in the residential program's van about how to properly use/wear a mask.
- Masks are available for all clients/visitors entering Francis House.
- Licencing trained staff on the proper use of masks and well as other PPE.
- Francis House has a collection of different types of masks (N95s, Medical Grade, Cloth, Protective Shields) available for use.
- In the event of an outbreak, or a resident showing symptoms of COVID-19, the resident(s) will be directed to wear a mask at all times.

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

- ✓ Francis House has reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.
- ✓ Francis House has enough hand washing/sanitizing facilities on site for all our staff and residents.
- ✓ Francis House 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.
- ✓ Francis House 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.
- ✓ Francis House staff who are cleaning have adequate materials.
- ✓ Francis House has removed unnecessary items around the residence to simplify the cleaning process.

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

- Francis House cleaning and sanitizing protocols were reviewed with Vancouver Coastal Health.
- Bleach used to clean is replaced daily.
- All high touched areas/surfaces are cleaned throughout the day/evening.
- Francis House has implemented a two-step cleaning process (clean -> sanitize).

- Overnight staff disinfect the full house, 7 nights a week.
- The kitchen is cleaned/sanitized after each use.
- Signage is posted on how to properly wash hands throughout the house.
- Most appliances are commercial grade to help further with cleaning/disinfecting of items.
- Signage has been placed around the house, 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

Francis House has developed the necessary policies and procedures to manage the workplace, including staff daily health screening, policies around who can be at the workplace, how to address illness that arises at the workplace, and how staff/residents 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 commencing work:

“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 work day. Staff must then contact the Residential Program Director or acting on-call supervisor (via email, phone, text or QR code), 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, the program director/supervisor will advise them they cannot enter the work place.

- Francis House has procedures to ensure that staff and visitors showing symptoms of COVID-19 are prohibited from the house. 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 limited in the residence and must meet pre-screening criteria prior to entry.
- 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

Francis House must ensure that everyone entering the residence, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves safe while onsite.

- Francis House staff review Association policy and procedures annually, via competency testing.
- All staff are aware of policies for staying home when sick.
- Francis House has posted signage throughout the office, including occupancy limits and effective hygiene practices.
- Francis House 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 Francis House continues to operate throughout the pandemic. If the residential program 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.

- Francis House is continually monitoring risk and we make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.
- Francis House 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, Francis House may consult the Joint Health and Safety Committee, Management, Staff, Contractors, Community Partners and/or licensing for collaborative input.

STEP 6: Assess and address risks from resuming operations

The Francis House Residential Program continues to operate throughout the global pandemic.

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

Our current approach working 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 Residential 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 Residential Pandemic Pan 2020
- 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 (Residential) and Covid-19 Safety