Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Communicable Disease Response and Remote Work Policy

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Policy Number	AE-2409-01
Policy Category	Employment
Approved By	Board of Trustees
Approval Date	June 15, 2026
Supersedes	AE-2406-01, AE-2407-01

PURPOSE

This policy establishes Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District's response framework for public health emergencies and communicable disease events, including provisions for workplace safety, employee protection, and operational continuity. It aligns with the BC Public Health Act, WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention requirements, and directives issued by the BC Centre for Disease Control and Island Health.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and the Board of Trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District. It governs preventive measures during elevated public health risk periods, remote or alternate work arrangements, and reporting, isolation, and return-to-work procedures when illness is suspected or confirmed. This policy replaces prior COVID-specific documents and serves as a standing response framework for future events.

DEFINITIONS

"BC Health Authorities" include the BC Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Officer, the BC Centre for Disease Control, and Island Health, which provide public health directives, disease prevention guidance, and outbreak management.

"Board of Trustees" means the Board of Trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District.

"Communicable Disease Event" means any instance, occurrence, suspected case, cluster, or outbreak involving a communicable disease — i.e., an illness caused by a specific infectious agent that can be transmitted directly or indirectly — including exposure, suspected or confirmed infection, or any event triggering public-health or workplace health & safety measures under BC Health authorities' guidance.

"Employee" for purposes of this policy means casual, part-time and regular employees including paid-on- call members and volunteers acting on behalf of the District.

"Exposure" means close or direct contact with a confirmed or suspected case of a communicable disease or has been present in an environment where transmission could reasonably occur, as defined by BC Health authorities.

"SSIFPD" means the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District.

POLICY STATEMENT

The District is committed to safeguarding health and maintaining essential services during communicable disease events. The SSIFPD subscribes to the following guideline principles:

1. Health and Safety First: Employee and public health is prioritized consistent with provincial public health orders.
2. Operational Continuity: Maintain essential emergency and administrative functions.
3. Compliance: All employees must adhere to directions from BC Health authorities and SSIFPD leadership.
4. Flexibility: Provisions may be adjusted as circumstances evolve or as directed by the Fire Chief or Corporate Administrative Officer.

Preventative Measures

In accordance with BC Health authorities' guidance, the SSIFPD will maintain a staffing call-out protocol, ensure hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) availability, encourage employees to stay home when ill, and post information on current health measures.

Employee Health and Isolation Requirements

Employees showing symptoms of a communicable disease must inform their supervisor and remain home until symptom-free per BC Health authorities' guidelines. Public health isolation or testing requirements will be followed as mandated. If an employee has had close or direct contact with a confirmed or suspected case of a communicable disease or has been present in an environment where transmission could reasonably occur, as defined by BC Health authorities, the exposure must be reported to their supervisor, and confidentiality will be maintained.

Remote and Alternate Work

Remote work may be implemented during declared public health emergencies or as a preventive measure. Employees must remain available during work hours, maintain confidentiality, and use SSIFPD systems securely. Equipment may be provided when feasible, and employees must ensure home safety standards, including maintaining a workspace that is ergonomically appropriate, free of physical hazards, compliant with basic fire safety practices, suitable for secure and uninterrupted work, and consistent with WorkSafeBC requirements for home-based workspaces.

Essential Service Continuity

During public health emergencies, essential employees such as Firefighters and First Responders may be directed to report under adjusted safety protocols. Return-to-work criteria follow BC Health authorities' recommendations.

Communication and Reporting

The SSIFPD will communicate updates from BC Health authorities. The Fire Chief or Corporate Administrative Officer will coordinate employee responses. Employees must promptly report exposures or confirmed infections.

AUTHORITY

BC Public Health Act and WorkSafeBC requirements.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action consistent with District policy.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records must be maintained per District records and legislative requirements.

REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

BC Public Health Act and Regulations:
https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_08028_01

Office of the Provincial Health Officer:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health- care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer

Island Health: www.islandhealth.ca

WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Prevention: www.worksafebc.com

BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC): www.bccdc.ca

REVIEW AND REVISION

This policy will be reviewed periodically or as directed by new guidance from BC Health authorities. The COVID-19 Work from Home Policy No. AE-2406-01 and the COVID Isolation Policy No. AE-2407-01 are rescinded.