

SOUND IDEARS COVID-19 SAFE PLAN

Procedural Guide and Plans to Keep Staff and Patients Safe

Basis: To ensure the safety and health of staff and patients while keeping the clinic operational by implementing procedures and policies that are aligned with and take direction from current WorkSafeBC and Provincial Health Officer guidance and directives. This Safe Plan will be updated as guidance, directives, and situations change at the clinical, provincial, and federal levels.

Sources and References:

The following materials have been sourced and referenced to develop this Safe Plan.

- a) Province of BC Public Health Orders, Notices & Guidance:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- b) WorkSafeBC Guidelines:
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates>
- c) College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia:
<https://cshbc.ca/about-cshbc/covid-19-information-for-registrants/>
- d) BC Centre for Disease Control Infection Prevention and Control guidance for Community-Based Allied Health Care Providers in Clinic Settings (Appendix A).

The Province of British Columbia ("Province" or "BC") has designed a 4-Phase Restart Plan for the province. This document starts with Phase 2 of the Province's plan. Under this stage, commencing from Mid-May (May 19, 2020), medically related services may open to the public "Under Enhanced Protocols". As a side note, as a designated Essential health care and health service operation, Sound idEARS has been operating under Phase 1 of the Province's plan – where only emergency or no-contact services could be provided.

Phase 2 Restart will, among other inputs, follow the Hierarchy of Controls for COVID-19 (Provincial Modelling Presentation) (Appendix B):

- The goal of the Hierarchy is to show the range from More Effective to Less Effective with the use of different controls – such as PPE, Administrative controls, Engineering controls, and Physical Distancing.

1. STAFF SAFETY

- 1.1 Staff must stay at home if they develop COVID-19 symptoms such as a recent continuous cough or fever.
- 1.2 Staff must stay at home if they are aware or have been made aware that they have been exposed to or been in contact with anyone who has or may have been exposed to COVID-19 must self-isolate from the date of first know exposure for a period of 14-days or as directed by public health guides. Staff must be cleared to return to work prior to returning to work – either by a public health representative or by means of other public health guidelines.
- 1.3 All staff who travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days must stay home. Each day, upon entering the Sound idEARS offices, or upon returning to the offices through out the day, Staff must immediately wash their hands in the office sink or use hand sanitizer to establish a procedural barrier for the spread of the virus.
- 1.4 At the beginning of each workday, upon entering the Sound idEARS offices each Staff member, after washing or sanitizing their hands, must confirm that they are free of fever.
- 1.5 Throughout each day, staff must practice good hygiene, including:
 - Regular hand washing
 - Avoiding touching your face
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
- 1.6 Keep physical distancing, as much as possible among office staff and patients, consider using a non-medical mask or face covering when this is not possible.
- 1.7 If you as a Staff member is aware of being at greater risk (over the age of 60 or with underlying medical conditions), be informed of your risk, think of your risk tolerance and take extra precautions. Inform Sound idEARS management to confidentially discuss our situation and the risk/exposure that you are facing.
- 1.8 If you as a Staff member do not feel safe or comfortable coming to work, please arrange to address your concerns with Sound idEARS management. Staff safety is a primary concern of Sound idEARS management not only for the health and safety of our immediate Staff, but also for that of the families of our Staff and the health and safety of our patients.

2. PATIENT SAFETY

- 2.1 All patients entering the Sound idEARS offices must have an appointment. No drop-ins are permitted. Drop-in-appointments (i.e. logging a patient's appearance in our offices) is vital to support any anticipated contact-tracing

- in the event that a community outbreak is identified in the future. All patients, then, must be logged into the EarWorks system – even if they just ‘drop-in’.
- 2.2 Prior to entering the Sound idEARS offices, all patients must be screened with a physical temperature check. Any patient with a temperature over 36.9°C must be shown the temperature reading and asked to contact the office once they have had an opportunity to seek or consider medical advice regarding their elevated temperature.
 - 2.3 Prior to entering the Sound idEARS offices, all patients and their accompanying parties must be pre-screened by telephone or in the case of ‘drop-in-appointments’ for any of the following symptoms, conditions, or exposures:
 - 2.3.1 Recent continuous cough or fever;
 - 2.3.2 Is aware that they have been exposed to or been in contact with anyone who has or may have been exposed to COVID-19 over the last 14 days
 - 2.3.3 Acknowledges that as a condition of the provision of any in-clinic service(s), when the patient and/or their accompanying party attends the Sound idEARS offices, they will all be subjected to a temperature check, be required to use hand sanitizer (and/or bring their own hand sanitizer for use upon entry into the clinic), wear a face mask, and limit their accompanying party to one other member. Further, the patient should provide a cellphone number that can be called or a text message sent to in the event that their appointment is delayed and they are required to wait in their vehicle until called into the office.

IF ANY patient or their accompanying party responds that they have any of the symptoms, conditions, or exposures to the above items, and/or does not acknowledge compliance with the above condition for the provision of service(s), must be advised that they are to contact the office once they have had an opportunity to seek or consider medical advice regarding their symptoms, conditions, or exposures. Further, their existing appointment will be cancelled and the newest appointment that can be booked must be no less than 14 days hence. Patients should also be advised to call 811 or their family physician. Staff are to log the call into EW and the Sound idEARS COVID-19 DAILY ALERT LOG must be completed for Sound idEARS management.

- 2.4 As a condition of the provision of any in-clinic service(s) ALL patients and/or any accompanying party entering the Sound idEARS offices must subject to a temperature check, must use hand sanitizer, and must wear a face mask. Failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the current appointment and any future appointments until the patient and/or any accompanying party consents to such condition of the provision of any service(s).

3. ADMINISTRATIVE, ENGINEERING, AND PHYSICAL CONTROLS:

- 3.1 In addition to the Staff and Patient appointment and workday safeguards, above, Sound idEARS will operate on a schedule that reflects the current phased opening position as specified by the Chief Provincial Health Officer. The current Phase 2 specifications will result in the following controls:
- Staggered work days for Staff – to reduce the number of concurrent in-office personnel;
 - Staggered work hours for staff – to reduce the number of concurrent in-office personnel;
 - All appointments that can be done by telephone and/or by telecare shall be scheduled as such to reduce the number of in-office appointments as much as possible;
 - Services contacted by patients must be cleaned regularly throughout the work day;
 - All in-bound hearing devices from any patient must be sanitized at the sanitizing station prior to being serviced. Hearing device sanitizing requires a disinfecting wipe of the device followed by a 40-minute (20 x 20) ultraviolet disinfecting box exposure;
 - Limit the number of patients that are permitted to wait in the waiting room;
 - Fewer patients per day will be booked-in to attend in-office appointments to allow for more physical distancing, fewer patients occupying the waiting room; allow for surface cleaning between patients; allow for equipment to be sanitized between patient appointments.

4. EXPOSURE ALERTS AND MITIGATION

- 4.1 Where a patient (or patient accompanying party) or a Staff member is exposed to an active or presumed-active case of COVID-19, the relevant Provincial authorities must be alerted immediately. Call 811 while immediately physically isolating the patient, accompanying party, or Staff member. Sanitize each individual Staff member, then don masks, gloves, and face shields.
- 4.2 Arrange for the safe transport/removal of the exposed or presumed-active-case exposed person (collectively the “Exposed Person”) from the Sound idEARS offices.
- 4.3 Sanitize all surfaces and Exposed Person contact points. Bag and seal all cleaning materials. Place all bagged and sealed cleaning materials and all PPE into an additional bag, seal, immediately apply hand sanitizer.
- 4.4 Vacate the premises and alert Sound idEARS management if that has not already been done. Follow the direction of the 811 Incident Team.
- 4.5 Text an update of all relevant information to Sound idEARS management if management is not on-site.
- 4.6 Self-isolate for 14 days or as directed by the Public Health authorities.

- 4.7 For those who were not exposed to the Exposed Person, provide the relevant Public Health authorities with the relevant contact tracing information to assist in mitigating the potential for community spread. Document the contact tracing information that is being provide to any outside parties by logging that information in the Sound idEARS DAILY ALERT LOG; patient privacy, even in these unprecedented times must also be protected to the extent possible.
- 4.8 Work with Public Health authorities to review the incident and to establish a re-start plan.

APPENDIX A: Hierarchy of Controls For COVID-19

APPENDIX B: BCCDC COVIC-19: Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Community-Based Allied Health Care Providers in Clinic Settings