

COVID-19 Underserved Population, Marginally Housed
GENERAL - Environmental Site Checklist
Encampments



Objective: This checklist is for professionals such as nurses, social workers, primary care providers, and outreach workers when providing services to clients in encampments.

Method: Use this checklist as a guide to review the site on environmental health best practices. The line items below intend to offer topics that may warrant further consideration—recognizing any site-specific nuances and operational procedures.

- Potable drinking water:* ensure safe and secure water supply access including drinking and sanitation onsite or at a nearby public facility.
- Hygiene:* hand sink and hand sanitizer are available (with consideration to safety and access), showers and laundry facilities on-site, or proximal to the site.
- Liquid waste:* proper waste disposal (for sewage and wash water), e.g. porta-potties or washrooms, should be made available 1 per 20 users.
- Solid waste:* provide adequate waste management and lidded containers.
- Pest control:* frequent garbage collection, in particular food removal, must be considered to prevent attracting rodents or other pests, which may increase the chance of vector-borne disease. It is advised that a pest control company be contracted to set up an integrated pest management program.
- Food safety, service, and donations:* All food distributed by organizations must be approved by the local Environmental Health Officer and provided as pre-packaged meals. Mealtimes should be staggered to reduce crowding and enable physical distancing.
- Hoarding:* storage for belongings to alleviate excessive cluttering should be addressed. If a dumpster is provided on-site, routine pick up is advised.
- Environmental exposures (heat and cold):* Provide at least one area with heat for residents to warm up in the winter months. Conversely, areas of shade are provided during summer/warmer months to protect against heatstroke. Tarps used for shade must comply with any fire code requirements (e.g., fire-rated and over one singular tent).
- Air quality:* open burning is prohibited in all areas. Smoking or inhalation area provided in line with BCCDC, provincial legislation and guidance.
- Environmental cleaning:* approved sanitizer provided, frequency of cleaning (minimum 2 times per day) of all commonly touched surfaces.
- Physical distancing:* ensure space between tents is 2m² between tents and 4m² of space per person.
- Additional considerations:* Pets, fire safety, security, harm reduction and hygiene supplies, access to health care services, and outbreak planning.

**If you have further questions or identify concerns,
Contact your local Environmental Health Officer for guidance.**

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-protection-environmental-services-locations>

Additional Resources

BCCDC (June 8, 2020). *Response to Homeless Encampment Health Issues in the Context of COVID-19: Guidelines and Best Practices*. Retrieved from:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/pho_homeless_encampment_responses_resource.pdf

BCCDC (2020). *People who are unsheltered – general webpage*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/priority-populations/people-who-are-unsheltered>

BCCDC (August 10, 2020). *Guidance for community cooling centres in the context of COVID-19*. Retrieved at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Guidance-for-Cooling-Centres-COVID-19.pdf>

Island Health (August 28, 2020). *Information for Community Partners – Underserved/Vulnerable Populations*. Retrieved at: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/covid-19/information-community-partners>

Island Health (2020). *COVID-19: Cleaning & Disinfecting for Public Settings*. Retrieved at:

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/covid-19/documents/fact-sheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf>

NCCEH (July 29, 2020). *Environmental public health guidance for encampments during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Located at: <https://ncceh.ca/documents/guide/environmental-public-health-guidance-encampments-during-covid-19-pandemic>