

Communicable Disease Policy

Implementation Date
10 May 2024

Last Revision Date

Position(s) Responsible
All Staff, Instructors,
Students & Contractors

Authorized by

Vice President, WMI

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Intent

This policy intends to provide best-practices guidance to prevent the spread of communicable diseases at Western Maritime Institute (WMI). It provides general guidance on how Public Health, WMI and individuals work together to prevent the spread of a communicable disease. It is intended to educate members of the WMI Community on such measures so that we all understand the available layers of protection. A communicable disease is any disease that spreads from one person to another or from a surface to a person. Communicable diseases can be referred to as infections or transmissible diseases.

Understanding the Risk

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a work or academic environment from one person to another (i.e. influenza, COVID-19, norovirus).

Routes of transmission

Contact: transfer of infectious agent from direct contact between people, or by indirect contact of a contaminated object (i.e. Norovirus)

Droplet: transmitted by infectious droplets during coughing, sneezing and talking (i.e. Influenza)

Airborne: infectious agents carried by dust or droplet nuclei that remain suspended in the air for long periods of time (i.e. Tuberculosis)

Common vehicle: infectious agents that are transmitted by contaminated items such as food, water, and fomites (i.e. Hepatitis A)

Communicable disease prevention measures

The following outlines key preventive measures and procedures that are in place to safeguard the wellbeing of everyone on our premises. By adhering to these guidelines and working together, we can effectively minimize the spread of communicable diseases and promote a culture of health and safety within our institute.

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Daily Health Checks

Daily health checks are a great way to check in with our body and evaluate how we are feeling. This allows us to determine if we are exhibiting symptoms of communicable disease and may keep us from attending WMI campuses and spreading illness. Every student and staff are enjoined to perform self-check daily to ensure they are not exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- Sore Throat
- Fever
- Difficulty Breathing
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Cough
- Chills
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- other abnormal symptoms of sicknesses

By checking in with our state of wellness every day, we may notice patterns in how we feel and begin to take corrective steps towards better health.

Behavioral Considerations

The behaviors outlined in this section each offer a layer of protection against communicable diseases. Some behaviors are used routinely, such as handwashing and respiratory etiquette, while others may be added when communicable disease risk is elevated (wearing masks, distancing).

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Handwashing

Washing hands frequently and practicing good hand hygiene, such as avoiding touching faces frequently, will reduce the chances of catching or spreading infections. Staff, instructors and students are encouraged to consider washing their hands during the day at the following times:

- Before touching eyes, nose, mouth or face or after being in a public space.
- Touching a surface frequently touched by other people
- After using the toilet or blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing
- Before and after preparing food or before or after eating food
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- After touching waste/garbage or handling shared objects.

WMI provides soaps in all washrooms and hand sanitizers in multiple spots around the campus i.e. hallways, entrances and exits

Respiratory Etiquette

Respiratory etiquette can help prevent infection by limiting the transmission of respiratory pathogens spread by droplet or airborne routes. An example of good respiratory etiquette is to cough or sneeze into upper sleeves, not hands, or cover our mouth and nose with a tissue.

Cleaning

Cleaning of shared areas, objects, and workstations, is important in preventing the spread of communicable diseases. Western Maritime Institute employs trained, equipped and capable custodial services to provide frequent cleaning of classrooms, washrooms, common areas, and high touch points.

HVAC Systems

Building ventilation systems can help in reducing the transmission of some communicable diseases, such as influenza and COVID-19. Building ventilation can be improved through measures such as enhanced filtration, the introduction of fresh air, opening windows & doors to ensure proper ventilation and system verification and maintenance

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Communicating Measures, Policies and Practices

Signage is placed at entrances and throughout the WMI Campuses (entrances, washrooms) outlining preventive measures, such as wearing masks (when necessary), practicing hand hygiene etc. These signs are updated if/ when changes and updates are made to the policies and practices, directed by the Provincial health authority or when there is an elevated risk of communicable disease with any of our campuses. Safety concerns are to be reported to the Office manager or any administrative staff present on campus.

Our Commitment

Western Maritime Institute (WMI) is dedicated to supporting individuals who exhibit symptoms of any form of illness. Staff members are entitled to take sick days and are encouraged to stay home, work remotely, and return to school only when they have fully recovered and are feeling well again. Students are also urged to inform their instructor or administrative office if they are feeling unwell. We strive to accommodate students who miss classes due to illness by providing opportunities to make up missed lessons within a reasonable timeframe. The management of Western Maritime Institute which includes the Office Manager, Campus Director, and the senior management commits to ongoing evaluation of measures, practices, and policies outlined in this document.