

North Bay Heritage Gardeners

COVID-19 Re-entry Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this Re-Entry Plan is to prepare for the re-opening of the North Bay Heritage Gardeners (NBHG) while ensuring a healthy and safe environment for staff, volunteers, and the public. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. As the pandemic evolves, precautions must be taken once operational restrictions are lifted by the Government of Ontario. This document includes guidance and recommendations from the North Bay Parry Sounds District Health Unit, and current information from the local, provincial, and federal health authorities. The Re-Entry Plan will include all municipal and local public health warnings, directions and recommendations related to COVID-19. This document does not replace medical or legal advice. Confirmation from the City of North Bay, Heritage North Bay and NBHG is required before re-opening. It is the responsibility of NBHG to ensure that volunteers and staff are aware of the preventative measures.

Supporting documents: Health Guidance for Volunteers and Health Guidance for Workers.

Symptoms

Symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild, flu like symptoms and other common respiratory infections, to severe. Symptoms vary but may include fever, new cough, difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, digestive issues, difficulty swallowing, hoarse voice, or loss of sense of taste or smell. Complications from COVID-19 can include serious conditions such as pneumonia, kidney failure, and in some cases death.

Transmission

1. The virus is thought to be spread mainly from person to person.
 - a. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - b. Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - c. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - d. Some recent studies have suggested that people who are not showing symptoms may spread COVID-19.



2. Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.
 - a. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about this virus.
 - b. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people.
 - c. Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggests that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious.

NBHG Re-entry Committee

The Re-Entry Plan will be monitored, reviewed and implemented by the re-entry committee. The committee members are the executive director, horticultural coordinator and the executive committee co-chairs. The re-entry committee is responsible for taking preventative measures on an ongoing basis, recognizing hazards and assessing risks. Ongoing review of the Re-Entry Plan is required to mitigate potential hazards. The re-entry committee will evaluate the Re-Entry Plan biweekly, unless otherwise required.

The executive director, with the guidance from the executive committee and board, is responsible for making decisions on when to open and when to allow staff to work in the office (once remaining closures are no longer mandated by the Ontario government). The executive director is also responsible for staying current on developments within the community and providing staff with up-to-date information about COVID-19 and policies, on a regular basis. If needed, the executive director, under the direction of the executive committee, will develop, modify, and implement policies and procedures in accordance with Centre for Disease Control, local, provincial, federal and health agencies guidelines.

Physical Distancing

1. At least 2 metres must be maintained between people, except members of the same household.
2. Physical distancing signs are to be placed in gardens and around the office to remind people to practice social distancing.
3. Maintain a limit of five people in the garden at one time to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
4. Encourage volunteers and staff to refrain from carpooling and social gatherings before and after gardening sessions.



5. Refrain from congregating.
6. **Anyone who is feeling unwell with these symptoms should stay home and call the Health Unit at 1-800-563-2808 to be assessed. Ask people to please notify their team leader and the executive director.**

Hand Hygiene

1. Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a disposable tissue (discard immediately in a garbage can) then wash or sanitize your hands.
2. Volunteers and staff to wash hands well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer: before and after entering office and gardens, after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
3. If hands are visibly dirty, but soap and water is not available, hands should be wiped clean before applying hand sanitizer.
4. The public handwashing stations and bathrooms are currently closed at the waterfront. Provide hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes at the office and in the shed. Since handwashing stations are not available, if hands are visibly soiled, hands should be wiped clean before applying alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
5. Practice hand hygiene between each interaction.
6. Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
7. Use a clean tissue or your knuckle/elbow to touch light switches, doors, buttons etc.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to practice physical distancing (2 metres). Wearing personal protective equipment is a last resort and is only effective if appropriate for the situation and worn properly.

Gloves: gloves can help limit contact with equipment and surfaces. Personal gardening gloves should not be shared and should be washed at home after each use. While cleaning surfaces, wearing disposable gloves will also be required. Disposable gloves will also be available for staff wishing to wear gloves at other times. Gloves are not a substitute for handwashing, and touching one's face should still be avoided, even if wearing gloves.

Face masks: Wearing a facial covering (cloth non-medical mask) is recommended where physical distancing may not be possible. A face covering is not proven to protect the person wearing it but may protect the people around you. It can act as a barrier that stops tiny droplets from spreading. A facial covering does not replace physical distancing or hand washing. If you wear a facial covering, you should still wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Do not touch your face while wearing a facial covering. It can become a source

of infection if not properly worn, laundered or discarded. Do not reuse single-use facial coverings and discard properly after taking off. Reusable facial coverings should be washed before reusing.

Other PPE: Safety equipment normally worn for personal protection while gardening should be cleaned after each use and should never be shared. Hard hats, goggles and face shields are only required (as appropriate) for the task being completed.

Masks and gloves will be available in the office and shed for anyone wanting to use them. Staff will be encouraged to wear a mask in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. Best practice would be to put on disposable gloves then reach for a mask.

Entrance Restrictions for Gardening

1. Only NBHG volunteers and staff are permitted to enter a garden. Volunteers may only garden in their designated garden bed and may not enter another garden. A completed 2020 registration form must be completed and submitted before gardening.
2. Complete the online [self-assessment](#) prior to entering the garden. If that is not possible, ask if any of the following bullet points apply. Volunteer may not be permitted to enter the garden if:
 - a. You have symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms vary, but may include fever, new cough, difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose, digestive issues, difficulty swallowing, hoarse voice, or loss of sense of taste or smell.
 - b. You are a close contact (for example, someone in your household or workplace) with someone who has or may have COVID-19, someone who is sick, and/or someone who recently travelled outside of Canada (including any contact you may have had with the person up to 48 hours before the person became sick).
3. Access to gardens is allowed for planting and maintenance only. Keep trips to the garden at a minimum. Other social events, programming, training, workshops etc., are not permitted (pending government approval).
4. A maximum of five people allowed in a garden bed at any time.
5. If you are uncomfortable gardening, you have the option to opt out of maintaining your plot this year. Your health is our primary concern. Please advise your team leader and the executive director so that the work for this season can be re-assigned.
6. Children should only be brought to the garden on an as-needed basis and should be instructed to practice social distancing and hand hygiene recommendations.
7. Pets are not allowed in the garden unless they are service animals.



8. Ask volunteers and staff to use their own gardening gloves. Do not share gardening gloves.

Office Operations

1. No public access to the office.
2. Limit events and meetings that require close contact.
3. Use flexible sick leave and telework policies. Employees are encouraged to work from home when possible. Make sure all employees have tasks they can work on from home should they feel unwell to encourage them not to come to work.
4. All desks or individual workstations are separated by at least six feet.
5. If staff or a volunteer develop a fever, cough, or shortness of breath while at work isolate them and have them return home as soon as possible and ask them to follow Canadian Government-recommended steps for persons who are ill with COVID-19 symptoms.
6. Communicate to staff and volunteers the importance of practicing healthy hygiene habits such as washing hands often, covering coughs and sneezes, and socializing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
7. If a staff member has a confirmed COVID-19 infection, inform other staff about their possible exposure to the virus, while maintaining confidentiality as required.
8. Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
9. Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
10. Cash will not be accepted at this time.
11. Practice physical distancing during breaks.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Shed, tools and equipment:

1. Ensure garden tools and equipment are cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
2. Encourage members to bring own gardening tools from home to avoid sharing.
3. Only team leaders and staff are permitted inside the shed. Touched surfaces, such as equipment and handles, must be wiped down using the disinfecting wipes provided. Shed access is limited to one person at a time.

Office materials:

1. Ensure access to pump soap, warm running water, paper towels/hot air dryers.
2. Washroom touchpoints to be wiped down after use.
3. Hand sanitizers at access to office and at desks.
4. Clean personal workspaces twice per day (computer, phones, touchpoints etc.).



5. Clean shared workspaces twice per day (light switches, doorknobs, touchpoints etc.).
6. Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment. Disinfectants must contain at least 60% alcohol.

Education

1. Create Health & Safety Guidelines for Volunteers.
2. Create Health & Safety Guidelines for Staff.
3. Train employees on the *COVID-19 Re-Entry Plan*, *COVID-10 Health and Safety Guidelines for Volunteers* and *COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for Employees*.
4. Email a copy of the *COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for Volunteers* to all volunteers registered with NBHG in 2019 and 2020.
5. Ensure team leaders are advised of the guidelines and are comfortable reiterating them to their team members.
6. Ensure there is an opportunity for volunteers and staff to have their questions answered.

Tracking

1. Report incidents and concerns to the executive director.
2. Daily log to be completed by staff when sanitizing workspaces, common areas and washroom.
3. Team Leaders to sign tools and equipment in and out of the shed.
4. Ensure volunteer registration forms are completed before returning to the waterfront.
5. Staff are encouraged to track the date, time, and their location if they leave the office for work reasons.
6. Volunteers are encouraged to stick to their regular gardening day and time. The team leader should report any change in regular gardening day and time to the executive director.
7. Employer must report illnesses acquired at work, including COVID-19, to:
 - a. the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (in writing) within four (4) days,
 - b. The Re-Entry committee.

Communication

1. Post re-entry plan and procedures to website.
2. Inform members and followers through newsletter, eblast, social media and other online platforms.



3. Write a media release to inform the media.
4. Place signage around the office in appropriate areas, and online platforms: physical distancing, hand washing, how to self-isolate, how to disinfect, sanitization of sites and equipment, how to report illness, how gardening will be scheduled.
5. 20 physical distancing signs will be available in the shed for team leaders to place in their gardens. Signs (may) need to be removed at the end of each garden session and returned to the shed.

How to evaluate:

1. Were the proper hygiene facilities made available?
2. Were physical distancing measures implemented?
3. Was the personal protective equipment (PPE) required to protect staff and volunteers available? Complete an inventory check on a weekly basis.
4. Was training on proper use of PPE provided?
5. Did staff and volunteers know what to do if they had symptoms? Did they follow the recommended protocols?
6. Are we aware of the emergency risks in North Bay region and how to prepare for different situations?

Contact Information

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The NBHG office is currently closed until further notice. Inquires can be directed to the executive director.

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Mailing address: 100 Ferguson St., North Bay, ON P1B 1W8

Telephone: (705) 472-4006

Website: www.northbayheritagegardeners.com

References and Resources (hyperlinked)

- Sustain Ontario: [COVID-19 Proposed Regulations for Community Gardens](#)
- [Government of Ontario news release about community gardens](#)
- [Online self assessment](#)



- [How to self isolate](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- [How to wash your hands](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfection for public settings](#)
- [Ontario's 2019 novel coronavirus webpage](#)
- [Ontario emergency information](#)
- [North Bay Parry Sounds District Health Unit: Community Gardens](#)
- [Framework for re-opening the province](#)
- [Detailed list of Stage 1 Businesses that may re-open](#)
- [Ministry of Health, COVID-19 Guidance: Essential Workplaces](#)
- [Public Health Ontario, Fact Sheet Resources](#)
- [For executive s and management](#)
- [For lawn care workers](#)
- [For community gardens](#)
- [Public Services Health & Safety Association, For Employers](#)
- [For Parks and Recreation](#)

Last update: **May 28, 2020**

Reviewed by: **NBHG executive committee**

Approved by:

Last approval date: