

Section:	Health and Safety		
Policy:	Communicable Diseases	Applies to:	All employees & Board of Directors
Issue Date:	March 10, 2020	Revised Date:	

Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to South Country Co-op in preparing for and responding to communicable diseases that may threaten South Country Co-op’s purposes and the safety of its employees and Board of Directors.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy:

“communicable disease” means an infectious disease transmissible by an infected individual to others via direct or indirect means.

Scope:

South Country Co-op will cooperate with National and Provincial Health Authorities in the event of a communicable disease event occurring in any region and location that South Country Co-op serves. All procedures will conform to the regulations for communicable disease control as set by National and Provincial Health Authorities.

South Country Co-op will provide employees, Board of Directors, vendors, and suppliers with the best information possible and adopt prudent public health care practices.

Contagious and infectious diseases will include those diseases regulated by National and Provincial Health Authorities. Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to, measles, influenza, viral hepatitis-A (infectious hepatitis), viral hepatitis-B (serum hepatitis), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection), AIDS, AIDS-Related Complex (ARC), leprosy, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), including the SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 (coronavirus) and tuberculosis. South Country Co-op may choose to broaden this definition within its best interest and in accordance with information received through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A communicable disease is an illness due to an infectious agent or its toxic products, transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person, animal or insect. Employees have a responsibility to prevent the spread of communicable diseases when they are aware or suspect they are or may be a carrier of a communicable disease.

For the purpose of this policy; employees are “aware” that they may have a communicable disease when they show or feel signs of illness, such as coughing, sneezing, fever, joint aches, overall ill feeling, or they have a diagnosis of a communicable disease from a health care provider. Employees are also “aware” when they know they have been exposed to someone with a known or suspected communicable disease, or when they have knowingly traveled into an identified area of risk listed through the World Health Organization or National Health Authorities.

South Country Co-op recognizes that employees with communicable diseases, may wish to and may be physically able to, work a regular or modified work schedule. South Country Co-op will accommodate these employees by allowing them to work as long as they are able to perform their essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, provided that medical evidence indicates that their condition does not pose a significant risk to the employee, co-workers, individuals, customers, and others.

South Country Co-op also recognizes its obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. Employees who have or are suspected of having a communicable disease that poses a significant risk or harm to the employee or others, will be restricted from the workplace until such time as the employee's presence in the workplace will not present a risk to the employee or to others. Medical documentation indicating such may be required.

South Country Co-op respects the right to privacy of any employee who has a communicable disease. All employee records or information regarding communicable diseases will be confidentially maintained in a secure area within the Human Resources department, apart from the employee's personnel file. The employee's medical condition will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to minimize the health risks to co-workers, customers and others. South Country Co-op in pursuant to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, South Co-op will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of individuals who have communicable diseases. In administering this policy, South Country Co-op will not disclose the identity of any individual who has a communicable disease, except as authorized or required by law. South Country Co-op may be required to disclose personal information if there is a risk of significant harm to the health and safety of the public, a group of people or if requested by the medical health officer or designate under the Public Health Act.

South Country Co-op will reasonably accommodate individuals affected with communicable diseases. Individual implications of communicable diseases will be addressed on an individual basis. South Country Co-op may take additional or alternate measures to deal with retail-wide implications or threats, of communicable diseases.

Reporting Process

It is important that employees let their Team Leaders and Human Resources know whenever they are diagnosed with a communicable disease. Employers should check with their local health department (811) to find out if any special control measures are needed when informed of an employee who has a communicable disease.

An employee who is restricted from work because of a communicable disease may return to work when he or she presents a written statement from their physician indicating that the employee is no longer infectious and, as of a specified date, is able to return to work and carry out the essential job functions.

If a communicable disease prevents an employee from reporting to work as scheduled, the employee must notify their Team Leader and Human Resources as soon as possible unless an emergency prevents them from doing so. This notification should be made by speaking directly to the Team Leader. However, if that is not possible, the employee may leave a voice or text message explaining why they are unable to report to work and leave a contact number where the employee can be reached.

In the event that travel measures are put into place, all travel must be reported to Human Resources in accordance to the travel guidelines within the policy.

Responsibilities

South Country Co-op will follow the medical advice and direction from the appropriate medical authorities (Alberta Health Services and Health Canada) and will comply with any applicable Alberta OH&S requirements.

South Country Co-op will keep informed of the recommendations on travel from Health Canada and educate and inform employees as needed. Along with providing general information regarding any updates, new protocol, and education related to any risks and prevention of communicable diseases.

CEO and Senior Leadership Team

Will establish operational guidelines and protocols as required, and will work with appropriate Health Care Authorities, when required.

Will ensure that all proper supplies and materials, and identified work measures are in place for all employees to reduce and prevent communicable diseases. Such supplies may include, but not limited to, sanitation wipes, masks, travel restrictions, and modified work arrangements.

Will monitor and assess communicable disease outbreaks throughout the world, and prepare their divisions' protocol against transmission to staff and the public, in accordance with Human Resources consultation and direction.

Human Resources

Will ensure all confidentiality is maintained at all times in regards to communicable diseases as outlined in this policy.

Will actively work with health authorities and OH&S when needed, along with maintaining all work arrangements to reduce the risk of communicable diseases.

Will monitor absenteeism and travel of employees to ensure South Country Co-op is maintaining a reduced risk of communicable diseases.

Will provide educational information and updated resources as available through National and/or Provincial Health Authorities.

Team Leaders

- If they have been informed that a Team Member may have a communicable disease, they are expected to report the information to Human Resources, as soon as reasonably possible.
- Report all travel taken to Human Resources for themselves and their team members in the event travel restrictions have been announced.

- Report and maintain absenteeism of team members to Human Resources.
- Cooperate and enforce any restrictions and/or modified work arrangements to reduce the risk of communicable diseases.
- To ensure they follow and maintain all responsibilities outlined for team members.

Team Members

Individuals who have or suspect they may have a communicable disease are expected to report their concerns to their Team Leader, Human Resources Manager and a health care professional and adopt responsible health care practices.

Employees are expected to reduce or prevent the spread of communicable disease, in the workplace by engaging in the following actions to protect themselves, co-workers and others.

Employees:

- Should stay home if they have or suspect that they have a communicable disease. The employee may return to work only after being free from symptoms for 24 hours and has obtained clearance from Health Care Authorities.
- Should practice proper hygiene in the workplace by covering their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into their elbow. Should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If that is not possible, they should wash their hands after touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Should avoid close contact with people who are ill in the workplace whenever possible. If this is unavoidable due to job responsibilities employees should use protective measures to protect themselves.
- Practice and participate in good hand washing techniques.
- Should try not to use another employee's phones, desks, keyboards or other work tools and equipment. If an employee must use those items, they should ensure that the items are cleaned first with a disinfectant.
- Should notify their direct Team Leader or Human Resources if they observe a co-worker, board of director, vendor, supplier, or customer displaying symptoms of a communicable disease.

An employee who comes into contact at any point with an individual who is infected with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), including the SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 (coronavirus) and tuberculosis or any other communicable disease identified by health authorities that is not listed, either within your home country or abroad must: 1. Notify HR immediately, 2. Not come into work or have any physical contact with any other South Country Co-op employee and 3. See a doctor to evaluate your condition.

Travel guidelines related to global spread of communicable diseases.

	Travel to a recognized Level 2 or Level 3 area	Travel outside your home country to a non-recognized area
Business Travel	Travel is not permitted	Travel must be approved by respective Senior Leadership Team Member. If you experience symptoms upon your return, you must notify HR. You will not be permitted to return to work for a to-be-determined time period until you no longer experience symptoms.
Personal Travel	Travel is not recommended to a recognized level 2 or level 3 area. If you choose to travel to a recognized level 2 or level 3 area, you must notify HR prior to departure. Upon return; you will not be permitted to return to work for a minimum of 14 days. You will be required to be tested prior to returning and must have clearance from a medical professional before you can return to work.	If you travel outside your home country, you must notify HR prior to departure. This enables South Country to plan should your travel destination become a recognized level 2 or level 3 area during or within 14 days of your trip. If you experience symptoms upon your return, you must notify HR. You will not be permitted to return to work for a-to-be determined time period until you no longer experience symptoms and have clearance from a medical professional.

An employee who comes into contact at any point with an individual who is infected – either in your home country or abroad – must notify Human Resources immediately, not come into work or have physical contact with any other employees and see a doctor to evaluate your condition.

In addition, South Country Co-op restricts access at all of our locations for contractors, suppliers, vendors, and external visitors who have traveled from known Level 2 and 3 areas.

Terms for travel advisories:

Watch - Level 1, Practice usual precautions

Alert – Level 2, Practice enhanced precautions

Warning - Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel—Widespread Community Transmission

Key Points for Level 3 travel advisories:

An area or Country is experiencing widespread community transmission of a communicable disease. CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel.

Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions may be at increased risk for severe disease.

Travelers should avoid contact with sick people and clean their hands often by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%–95% alcohol.

Travelers should stay home for 14 days after returning and practice social distancing.

Travelers that are sick with fever, cough, or have trouble breathing should call ahead before seeking medical care.