

Essential Services

Essential services are those daily services essential to preserving life, health, public safety and basic societal functioning. They are the services British Columbians come to rely on in their daily lives.

Developed by Emergency Management BC in consultation with other government ministries and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), this definition is intended to clarify what qualifies as an essential service in the context of the Province's response to COVID-19. In consultation with the PHO, these services should and are encouraged to remain open. They must, however, follow the orders and guidance provided by the PHO to ensure safe operations and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The Provincial Health Officer has ordered some types of businesses to close. Any business or service that has not been ordered to close and are also not identified on the essential service list may stay open if they can adapt their services and workplace to the orders of the Provincial Health Officer.

Child care providers and schools providing care and/or in-class instruction for children are to prioritize placements for those children whose parents are employed in Health and Health Services, Social Services, Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Emergency Response.

Health and Health Services

1. Direct-to-public Health Services

- a) All health care services, including acute care (hospitals), secondary care / long-term care, coroners services, health care providers working within and outside an acute care setting and other health services including public health, detox facilities, safe-injection sites, COVID-19 testing, clinical research supporting the COVID-19 response, blood/plasma donation services, and emergency pre-hospitalization services;
- b) Other health services and caregivers (e.g., physicians, dentists, psychiatrists, psychologists, mid-level practitioners, nurses and assistants, infection control and quality assurance personnel, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists and assistants, social workers, mental health and substance use workers including peer support workers, speech pathologists, diagnostic and therapeutic technicians and technologists, counselors, chiropractors, naturopaths, dentists, crisis centres, outreach workers, overdose and harm reduction services, meal programs);
- c) Health first responders (paramedics);

2. Health Service Providers

- a) Pharmaceutical production, medical laboratories/research, medical testing, pharmacies, medical supply and equipment manufacturers, wholesale, distribution and stores; and analytical testing labs, related to testing of finished product for pathogens and contaminants;
- b) Safety supply (e.g. work clothes, Personal Protective Equipment, medical/pharmaceutical/ laboratory supplies, etc.) stores, manufacturers, technicians, logistics, and warehouse operators;
- c) Medical wholesale and distribution;
- d) Health plans, billing, and health information;