



## Memorandum

**Date:** March 9, 2020

**From:** Alan Veerman  
Chief Operations Officer

**To:** All Vector Institute Researchers and Staff

**RE:** Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Vector Institute continues to monitor developments involving the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

At this time, **the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) continues to assess the public health risk for Canada associated with COVID-19 as being low.**

Below, please find additional information and resources surrounding prevention of this virus, and updates regarding ongoing operations at Vector.

### Prevention

As with any virus, the spread of germs is largely preventable:

- If you are feeling unwell, stay home, either by working remotely or taking a sick day if necessary.
- Ensure you are washing your hands often with soap and warm water for a minimum period of 20 seconds.
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue and wash or sanitize your hands afterwards; please note that additional hand sanitizer has been made available throughout the office.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, or eating without thoroughly washing your hands in advance.
- Wipe down all surfaces in meeting rooms upon completion of a meeting and disinfect your desk, phones, and computers regularly; additional Lysol wipes have been made available throughout the office.
- Ensure your dishes are fully disinfected by running them through the dishwasher and by washing your hands before you touch clean dishes.
- If you feel uncomfortable shaking hands, consider a wave, fist-bump or elbow-tap instead.

### Travel

For those of you who may be travelling over the coming weeks, PHAC has also stated that the risk to Canadian travellers abroad is generally low, though that risk varies depending on the destination. For more information, you may review the Government of Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories page [here](#).

If you have a fever and/or new onset of cough or difficulty breathing **OR** in the 14 days before symptom onset, you have:

- been to a [COVID-19 impacted area](#), or
- been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, or
- been in close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to a COVID-19 impacted area,

you are asked to **refrain from entering the Vector space, and to immediately self-identify to your direct supervisor, and/or a member of the Human Resources team who will work with you on next steps.** It is also recommended that you contact your health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000).

This restriction will be applicable to all visitors to the space, and signage will be posted outside all Vector entrances, as well as corresponding language on our [website](#).

### Flexible Work and Research Arrangements

The Vector Institute continues to offer a flexible working environment for staff and researchers alike.



Anyone who feels unsafe at Vector or while travelling to Vector, is at high-risk (e.g., has a compromised immune system), or is in close regular contact with someone who is at high-risk, is encouraged to work with their direct supervisor on an appropriate work-from-home arrangement.

In support of this model, please make note of the following available resources:

*Members of Vector's Professional Staff:*

- **Email & Calendar**
- **Audioconferencing**
- **Videoconferencing**
- Staff can access **contact information for colleagues** via Bamboo HR

*Researchers and Members of Vector's Professional Staff:*

- **Instant messaging**
- Researchers can utilize the **Vector Wiki**

Meetings, Events and Talks

Vector's event and talk schedule is currently under review. Updates on cancellations, changes, rescheduling and policy changes, or program amendments will be shared with the community as they happen and will be available on our website [here](#).

Wherever possible, we encourage all meetings with external guests (i.e., non-Vector members) to be held virtually rather than in-person.

The next Researcher Information Session will be postponed until further notice.

In the meantime, please see the Vector Support Wiki for answers to any questions you may have about computing, the office, the history of Vector, and details on who to contact if you require further assistance.

Further Updates & Resources

Vector will continue to provide updates about events, operations, and office space via email and on our dedicated public web page: <https://vectorinstitute.ai/covid-19-updates/>

For your reference, here is a list of government public health resources:

Canada/Ontario

- Government of Canada **Travel Advice and Advisories**: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- Government of Canada Public Health COVID-19 **FAQ**: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/frequently-asked-questions.html>
- Government of Canada Public Health COVID-19 **Update**: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- Government of Canada Public Health COVID-19 **Response**: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse.html>
- Follow **Canada's Chief Public Health Officer**, Dr. Theresa Tam, on Twitter at [@CPHO\\_Canada](#)
- Government of **Ontario Dedicated Web Page**: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>
- Ontario Ministry of Health – **Status Update**: [https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus?\\_ga=2.126983049.545928020.1583612271-2068395692.1583612271](https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus?_ga=2.126983049.545928020.1583612271-2068395692.1583612271)
- Ontario Ministry of Health – **Guidance**: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019\\_guidance.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx)

World Health Organization (WHO)

- **Emergencies**: Coronavirus: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>



- Q&A: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
- Topic: Coronavirus: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- About COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>
- Latest Update: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>