

Safety Sound-off

VIDC Occupational Health & Safety Committee Newsletter

How Clean is Your Office Work Space?

Inside this issue:

Have you noticed how easy it is to pick up germs in your office? Whether they're brought in from home or public transport, work is a great place for sharing bacteria and viruses.

Germs spread quickly from one person to the next, from stomach-churning food poisoning bacteria such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Campylobacter* and *Staphylococcus aureus* to viruses like norovirus, colds and flu.

Micro-organisms like these don't normally multiply on your desk or chair without help. They don't move around unless we do. So, we're all responsible for transferring germs from one person to the next.

To fight back, beat the germs and take control of your health in the workplace, you need to tackle the most touched areas in the office – these office germ hotspots:

DESK: A US study has found that on average phones are the most contaminated item in the office. Dr Charles P Gerba from the University of Arizona, found over 25,000 organisms per surface. Comparisons with other surveys reveal that some typical desk items could be around seven times more contaminated than traditionally 'dirty' items such as toilet seats, which often get more attention for cleaning.

KEYBOARD & MOUSE: One study found more than 3,000 micro-organisms per square inch on key-

boards and over 1,600 bacteria per square inch on a computer mouse. Similar numbers were found in another carried out by Gerber. One survey by office supplies company Viking, found the bacteria *Staphylococcus* on 60% of desks.

MUG: Simple rinsing may not remove a colleague's germs. And the outside surface of the mug could become contaminated by their hands. If they had a cold, you could get their germs.

DOOR HANDLES: Door handles are one of the most touched spots in the office and a chief spreader of viruses like the norovirus. Norovirus and other viruses and bacteria can also be found in faeces (poo). They can be transferred to surfaces around the office if someone doesn't wash their hands after going to the loo. And that's more common than you might think. A study by commercial hygiene service



provider Rentokil Initial, found that 25% of office workers do not wash their hands after using the toilet. Another survey of 100,000 office workers in Europe reportedly found that 40% of women and 62% of men did not wash their hands after visiting the loo.

PHOTOCOPIER: Everyone uses the buttons of the photocopier, so you can pick up whatever germs are on their hands, meaning that a cold or flu virus can be transferred from your hands to your eyes. If everyone works a bit

How Clean is your Office Workspace	1
Drop, Cover & Hold On	2
Word Search	2

Health & Safety

Dates to Remember

◆ **Oct. 17, 2019:** Shake Out BC

harder to make their hands cleaner, the office will be a healthier place.

SPREADING THE NEWS: Working attitudes don't make it easy to keep sickness at bay. A recent survey found that half of UK workers would still go to work with a stomach bug, while 55% said they would go to work even with the flu. If you go into work sick, it spreads the chances of others getting an illness. But it's not a foregone conclusion they'll be ill. Keep the office spotless, use anti-microbial wipes, wash your hands, and eat somewhere other than your desk – and touch (clean) wood, the germs will pass you by.

More Information Can be Found here: <https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/workplace-hygiene-6-office-germ-hotspots/>



Welcome to our VIDC Health and Safety Newsletter.

Our Committee members are:
Sarah Fairbrass, Chair;
Martha Higgins; Wayne Smiley.

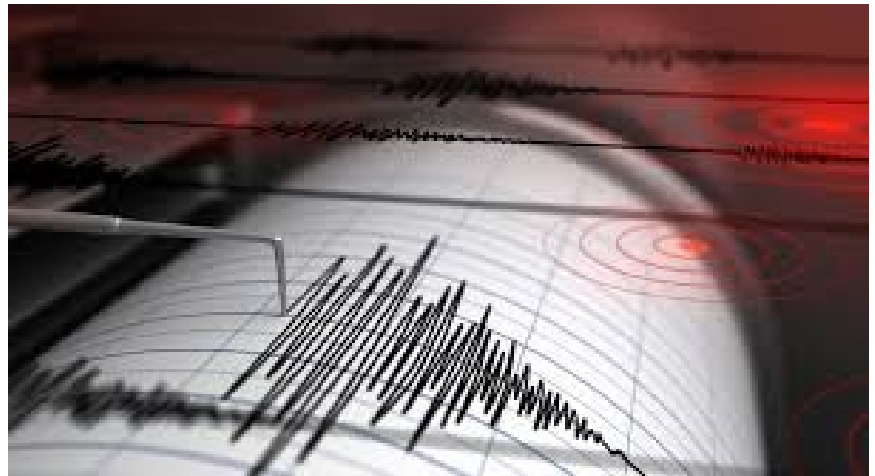
www.vidc.cupe.ca

Drop, Cover & Hold On

Are you ready for the big one? The ShakeOutBC Drill is scheduled for 10:17 a.m. on October 17, 2019. This means that wherever you are at that moment—at home, at work, at school, anywhere—you should Drop, Cover, and Hold On as if there were a major earthquake occurring at that very moment, and stay in this position for at least 60 seconds.

This is a good opportunity to practice with your family, friends, co-workers what to do and to take stock of your own emergency kits. Do you have kits? What about pets? Medications?

As a JOHS Committee, this is a great time to pull out your emergency response procedures and practice a drill. Did everyone do what they were supposed to per the procedures? What



went well, what didn't?

However, Emergency Preparedness is more than having an emergency kit. You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for a minimum of

72 hours as it may take emergency workers some time to reach you. For a great resource to help you prepare, check out

<https://www.burnaby.ca/City-Services/Public-Safety/Emergency-Program/Get-Prepared.html>

C	M	O	U	L	D	R	E	T	L	E	H	S	B
O	Q	M	E	D	I	C	I	N	E	Q	U	A	H
N	E	K	A	U	Q	H	T	R	A	E	C	Z	Y
T	O	I	L	E	T	G	E	T	P	T	S	P	G
A	V	O	M	I	T	E	C	H	E	K	D	H	I
M	S	S	U	R	I	V	O	R	O	N	I	O	E
I	R	A	G	J	K	R	I	Z	P	P	K	T	N
N	O	S	S	K	Q	A	I	X	L	E	R	O	E
A	O	D	G	H	L	T	O	C	E	T	E	C	
T	D	F	H	C	A	Y	K	C	I	S	P	O	S
E	O	O	L	L	W	K	P	V	M	N	P	P	M
D	D	E	S	K	E	U	E	B	A	W	E	I	R
S	A	L	M	O	N	E	L	L	A	E	R	E	E
N	F	R	I	D	G	E	P	N	Q	R	P	R	G

WORD SEARCH

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|----------|
| CLEAN | CONTAMINATED | SHAKE |
| GERMS | PHOTOCOPIER | KIT |
| SALMONELLA | SO SICK | PLAN |
| BACTERIAL | MUGS | MEDICINE |
| VOMIT | FRIDGE | SHELTER |
| NOROVIRUS | MOULD | PETS |
| TOILET | EARTHQUAKE | KIDS |
| DOORS | PREPPER | |
| HYGIENE | | |

Submit your completed word search to vpcupe374@gmail.com for a chance to win a prize!

Last Issue Winners: Trudy Court !!

