

## 1 - Situation Statement

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the [COVID-19 outbreak](#) a pandemic. This indicates a high level, global risk of infection from person to person within communities, not simply from travelers infected in a foreign country and returning home.

Many governments and health organizations and other groups are influencing and making decisions to reduce the impact and spread of the virus. These include the restriction of travel from China and Europe to the United States, the cancellation of professional sport seasons and competitions, and the cancellation or postponement of many other events nationally and internationally.

*On March 15, 2020, the Government of Alberta has stated that the risk of exposure within Alberta is elevated due to community spread and is anticipated to increase over the coming weeks. Significant measures are in place to slow the spread. For up-to-date information, visit the [GoA](#) website.*

## 2 - Goals

Next Architecture Inc. will keep ourselves, our families, our contacts, and those around us as safe as possible from the effects of this outbreak. The main areas of focus are our individual and collective physical, financial and emotional health.

We will remain apprised of this fluid and developing situation, apply advice from government and health authorities, in addition to creating and adhering to a Business Continuity Plan, which may be adjusted as necessary.

We will continue to deliver outstanding service in the face of this unfortunate adversity, and will be transparent in updating our industry partners on the effects this outbreak may have on our ability to deliver the service expected of us.

### 3 - Internal Response Team for Business Continuity

Next has established a COVID-19 Response Team to assess, manage and monitor the situation in an ongoing manner. This team will meet at least every 48 hours to address any new concerns, and communicate updates as needed to everyone at Next, and to industry partners.

Corporate Direction – Allan Partridge, Principal  
Substitute Corporate Direction – Ian Morgan, Principal

Team Primary Contact – Tyler Vreeling, Business Development  
Team Contact – Scott Hawryluk, Senior Technologist  
Team Contact – Summer Bourgon, Designer  
Team Support – Adrea Hamdan, Studio Administrator

### 4 - Internal Assessment of Risk / Level of Exposure

Based on recent statements from the Government of Alberta, we affirm the risk of exposure both at Next and within Alberta is elevated at this time due to community spread.

As indicated by [Alberta Health Services](#), increased risk factors for individuals may include:

- Development of fever and/or cough or shortness of breath along with any of the criteria below;
- Travel outside of Canada.
- Close contact\* with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19.
- Close contact\* with a person with acute respiratory illness who has travelled anywhere outside of Canada within 14 days prior to illness onset.

\*A close contact is defined as a person who provided care for the individual, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or who had other similar close physical contact with the person without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment OR who lived with or otherwise had close prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with the person while they were infectious OR had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the person (e.g. was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

To reduce risk, we encourage great hygiene, social distancing, and avoidance of face-to-face meetings or use of public transit.

## **5 - Open for Business (Remote Studio Protocol)**

Our primary concern remains the protection of ourselves and our families, and then of the interests and fiscal health of our industry partners.

We anticipate that the impact on our day-to-day operations will be minimal throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. To further reduce the risk, and to prevent higher-level impact, we will follow the plans outlined in this document.

Based on the current elevated risk levels in Alberta, we are closing our Physical Studio in the interest of our collective health. We will initiate our Remote Studio protocol, beginning March 17, 2020, to limit disruption to our business and projects.

Infrastructure already in place at Next to facilitate the operation of a Remote Studio includes:

- Our remote servers are fully accessible by everyone at Next, and includes access to all needed drives, files, databases and software.
- We issue portable devices (not fixed workstations), and other accessories are made available to take home when needed.
- We issue work cellphones (not desk phones), allowing for greater flexibility.
- Utilization of Microsoft Teams for communication and collaboration internally and externally, including remote meetings.

Additional measures we will take include:

- Being flexible to allow people to work at non-standard times to balance child care and deliverables.

### **5a - Remote Studio Protocol / Remote Work Triggers**

If anyone from Next or a member of their household has a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, we will close our Physical Studio and initiate our Remote Studio protocol.

If anyone from Next or a member of their household has had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, their household will [self-isolate](#) and when possible, work remotely.

As a pre-emptive measure in the interest of our collective health, we may elect to close our Physical Studio and initiate our Remote Studio protocol at any time. If anyone from Next is not comfortable working at our Physical Studio *at any time*, they are encouraged to work remotely without any fear of judgement or repercussion.

## **6 - Internal Measures Effective Immediately Until Further Notice**

### **6a - Physical Health**

Everyone at Next will:

- Read and review [Information for Albertans](#) on the Alberta Health Services website.
- Be provided tissues and hand sanitizer, for all rooms and workstations.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
  - Handwashing procedures will be posted at sinks.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching other people's workstations or accessories, disinfect when this occurs.
  - All common-use accessories in boardrooms will be locked up and be inaccessible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily including toilet seats, toilet flush activators, washroom and kitchen taps, kitchen surfaces and handles, dining surfaces, printer display, washroom, fridge and exit door handles.
  - Immediately clean and dry dishes after use, or place in dishwasher; clean boardroom surfaces after meetings.

Wherever possible we will cancel or limit non-essential attendance at events, activities and meetings outside of the Studio, and perform what can reasonably be accomplished through technological, digital and virtual means.

Anyone at Next may work remotely for any reason without fear of judgement, including to avoid public transit, or due to underlying health issues.

Anyone at Next with symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing will stay home.

Anyone at Next who has travelled outside of Canada or been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 will stay home and call Health Link 811.

We encourage anyone at Next with travel plans outside of Canada to reconsider. If alternate arrangements cannot be made, we encourage anyone returning from travel to proactively self-quarantine or follow the advice set out by the [Government of Canada](#).

## **6b - Financial Health**

Everyone at Next will continue to fill work as planned so we can continue to meet our corporate financial obligations, and as colleagues we will continue to receive regular pay.

Where time-off is required, use of Responsible Time Off first, and then Sick Time is encouraged. Due to our adoption and use of technology, we do not anticipate individual disruption that lasts beyond a few days. Should we find ourselves in a self-isolation situation or Remote Studio protocol scenario, we will endeavor to maintain pay for all colleagues. There is no intent at this time, nor will there be in the future, to institute layoffs – there is more than enough work to do, and although we expect minor hiccups, we will carry on.

Project Team continuity and delivery of services will be maintained through regular planning meetings, project scrums, and stand-up or call-in meetings. Where necessary, these meetings will happen virtually. Every project and deliverable has a primary and secondary contact / lead, and this will be monitored and updated bi-weekly as part of our regular project planning, with adjustments made as necessary.

Adjustments of plans, work schedule, and workload may be necessary and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, with final approval by a principal.

## **6c - Emotional Health**

We encourage everyone at Next to talk about COVID-19 and its impacts, and to support each other as necessary. We recommend establishing your own family/friend protocol in the event of self-isolation for delivery of supplies.

Access to supports required beyond an individual's network, family or other resources are available through our Insurance Benefits providers. Check out our Human Resources Channel or contact our Benefits Cohort for further information if necessary.

Further information and resources are available on the [CDC](#) website.

## **7 - External Measures Effective Immediately Until Further Notice**

We're sorry for the COVID-19 outbreak and the effects it's having, and we'll do what we can to limit the impact on us and our peers physically, financially and emotionally. We hope others will join us in adopting reasonable measures including the following:

Project Team continuity and delivery of services will be maintained through regular planning. Every project and deliverable at Next has a primary and secondary lead, for continuity, with adjustments made as necessary.

Adjustments to project plans or schedules may be necessary and will be discussed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with project stakeholders, with final approval by one of our principals. The decision will be communicated to all appropriate project team and stakeholder members.

Effective immediately, we will cancel all site-meetings, and cancel or limit non-essential attendance at events, activities and meetings outside of our Studio, and perform what can reasonably be accomplished through technological, digital and virtual means.

- We will practice great hygiene and ask others to do the same.
- We will practice social distancing.
  - If you attend our Studio or see us on Site, we won't shake your hand. Please don't take it personally.
- All currently planned meetings at our Studio with external parties have been changed to virtual meetings through Microsoft Teams.
- All upcoming meetings that do not require essential in-person attendance will be conducted through Microsoft Teams.
  - If you need a meeting invite, please request it through your project contact at Next.
- All necessary field reviews will continue to be attended by Next, unless a job Site is closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Contractors are responsible for Site safety management, and we encourage our Clients to coordinate with Alberta Health Services and Contractors to establish Site-specific protocols addressing concerns around the COVID-19 outbreak, as necessary.
  - Personal Protective Equipment protocols are to be followed as per contractor requirements for anyone entering a given project Site.
  - Next will follow recommendations from Alberta Health Services for any additional cleaning or Personal Protective Equipment requirements on a given project Site (EG masks), as these requirements are made available.

## 8 - Communication

Next has established a COVID-19 Response Team to assess, manage and monitor the situation in an ongoing manner. This team will meet at least every 48 hours to address any new concerns, and communicate updates as needed to everyone at Next, and to industry partners.

For transparency, we will post our COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan for viewing or download on our website, as well as mention our efforts on Social Media platforms and within our email signatures. This plan will be updated as necessary.

If anyone from Next or a member of their household has a confirmed case of COVID-19, we will communicate this internally. If the individual had contact with anyone else we are able to identify, we will notify them in confidence accordingly.

## 9 - Sources and Further Resources

[Alberta Health Services](#)

[Government of Alberta](#)

[Government of Canada](#)

[Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Alberta](#)

[World Health Organization](#)