



October 5th, 2021

- Important site to follow (Gorman Group):
<https://www.gormanbros.com/coronavirus-updates/>
- Important site to follow (Canada):
 - www.canada.ca/covid-19
 - <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- Important site to follow (United States):
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

To all employees:

To Rapid Test or Not...That is the Question

It has been a while since my last COVID communication. The global situation has changed since then. We now know that the Delta variant is as aggressive as predicted, spreads quickly and more younger people appear to be getting hit. Our goal continues to focus on keeping our employees and families safe and our plants operating. We know that you all support that position. The new variant and subsequent wave of infections has led us to review the direction we are taking as a group.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- We will continue to monitor conditions in our plants, communities, and directives from our health professionals. We will respond appropriately.
- We will continue to encourage employees to get vaccinated. It is the best line of defense available to us for protection of ourselves, our families, and fellow employees.
- We will continue to wear masks in enclosed areas and follow the hygiene standards that we have now become so familiar with.
- A B.C.-based forest products company recently had an outbreak of COVID with the result that Interior Health mandated them to only allow vaccinated employees onsite for a period of ten days.
- Nearly 25% of our work force is 55 or older. This age group is at a high risk of hospitalization or ending up in an ICU. It is all our responsibility to protect each other.
- The current average age of COVID cases is 34 years old, and so is the average age of our workforce.
- Even if not in a hospital or ICU it is now known that COVID can have long term lingering impacts.
- Flu season is coming which will confuse symptoms with COVID. We will be organizing free flu shots on site and we are seeing if a separate COVID vaccine supply can be made available at the same time should anyone want to get that too.

COVID "RAPID TESTING"

- COVID Rapid testing is becoming more commonplace to test for COVID in the workplace, and we have developed a policy focused on it that will be communicated with employees.
- COVID Rapid tests are very accurate in detecting if a person is contagious with COVID and can provide a result in under 15 minutes.
- COVID rapid tests can distinguish between COVID and the flu.
- We now require all employees who travel between divisions to do a rapid test before going.
- The test will help protect the worksite and your home life with information that you may not have been otherwise aware of.
- We are hoping that employees will volunteer to participate in the screening program a couple times a week. Each test will be done for free, in private and self-administered during your work time. It is not painful or uncomfortable at all. I do it every week!
- Please identify to your supervisor, HR, or safety resource if you want to volunteer for these tests.

I strongly believe that each of us has a moral responsibility to look out for each other. These are ethical, safety and employment issues and choices that ultimately impact individuals, families, communities, and our workplace being able to provide your ongoing and uninterrupted wages.

While we encourage employees to get fully vaccinated, we have not mandated it and will only do so as a last resort or if directed to by an authority. We would rather try a regular COVID rapid testing program before getting to the point where requiring vaccinations is needed to protect the health and safety of our employees. We are monitoring regional and worksite COVID conditions, and if we feel it is necessary to provide a safe working environment, we will move to require regular rapid testing for all employees.

