

## **1. Worksafe BC Regulations**

### **4.84 Eating areas**

- (1) Workers must not keep or consume food in an area of a workplace where it could become unwholesome because of workplace contaminants.
- (2) The employer must ensure that an area suitable for the storage and consumption of food is provided for workers if
  - (a) there is a risk that food stored or consumed at a workplace may become unwholesome because of workplace contaminants, or
  - (b) food storage or consumption is restricted or prohibited at the workplace.

[Enacted by B.C. Reg. 421/2004, effective January 1, 2005.]

### **4.85 Washroom facilities**

- (1) Except as provided by subsection (2), the employer must ensure that a sufficient number of plumbed washroom facilities are readily available for workers.
- (2) If plumbed washroom facilities cannot be provided because of the nature of the workplace or the nature of the work in which the worker is involved, the employer must
  - (a) provide access to portable washroom and hand-washing facilities, or
  - (b) make such other reasonable arrangements to accommodate workers as the circumstances allow, if access to portable washroom and hand-washing facilities cannot be provided.
- (3) If washroom facilities are provided they must be
  - (a) maintained in proper working order,
  - (b) kept clean and sanitary, and
  - (c) provided with the supplies necessary for their use.

[Enacted by B.C. Reg. 421/2004, effective January 1, 2005.]

### **4.86 Change areas**

If the employer requires the worker to change into protective work clothing at the workplace, the employer must ensure that adequate change areas are provided.

[Enacted by B.C. Reg. 421/2004, effective January 1, 2005.]

### **4.87 Unsafe water**

The employer must display at every plumbed non-potable water source from which a person might reasonably believe he or she can safely drink, a notice that the water is unfit for human consumption.

[Enacted by B.C. Reg. 421/2004, effective January 1, 2005.]

### **Sections 4.88 to 4.106**

Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 421/2004, effective January 1, 2005.]

## 2. Worksafe BC Related Guidelines

Guidelines - Part 4 - Occupational Environment Requirements

- [Related Regulations](#)
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### **G4.84(1) Eating areas – Unwholesome food**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.84(1) of the *OHS Regulation* ("Regulation") states:

Workers must not keep or consume food in an area of a workplace where it could become unwholesome because of workplace contaminants.

Section 4.84(1) refers to food becoming "unwholesome because of workplace contaminants." The term "workplace contaminants" means chemical or biological substances arising from workplace processes, and may include airborne contaminants or contaminants on surfaces, such as tables, benches, eating utensils, clothing, or skin. The employer must ensure food is not stored or consumed in areas where the presence of these contaminants could result in a hazard to workers as a result of ingestion with food or beverages. Typically the measures taken to ensure compliance would include worker orientation and training, posting of notices or signs, and effective supervision and enforcement.

### **G4.84(2) Eating areas – Storage and consumption**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.84(2) of the *OHS Regulation* ("Regulation") states:

The employer must ensure that an area suitable for the storage and consumption of food is provided for workers if

- (a) there is a risk that food stored or consumed at a workplace may become unwholesome because of workplace contaminants, or
- (b) food storage or food consumption is restricted or prohibited at the workplace.

#### **Storage and Consumption**

The intent of section 4.84(2) is to ensure that, where there are restrictions on storage or consumption of food in work areas for any reason, the affected workers are able to access and use an area suitable for storage and consumption of their food.

An area suitable for food storage means a place where stored food is protected from workplace contaminants. It is not the intent to require the employer to provide temperature-controlled storage facilities, rather to require the employer to provide an area suitable for storage away from possible contaminants.

An area suitable for consumption of food typically means an area that is isolated from the contaminants in the workplace and that is equipped and maintained for safe consumption of food.

### Suitability

If the employer provides an eating area, the following minimum floor area per person, based on the maximum number of persons scheduled to use the room at any one time, is recommended:

No. of persons	Floor area per person	
	In square metres	In square feet
25 and fewer	1.1 (min. 5.6 sq. m.)	12 (min. 60 sq.ft.)
26 to 74	.93	10
75 to 149	.65	7
150 to 499	.56	6
500 and more	.47	5

The floor, walls, and ceiling of an eating area should be finished with a material that can be easily maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. The eating area should have sufficient receptacles with self-closing lids provided and used for the disposal of all waste food and paper, and these should be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition and be emptied daily.

The air quality in an indoor eating area provided by the employer must meet the indoor air quality provisions of sections 4.70 to 4.80 of the *Regulation*. Preferably, an indoor eating area should have a total window area equal to at least 10% of the floor area, and windows capable of being opened should equal at least 5% of the floor area. Mechanical ventilation should be configured so no workplace contaminants are circulated into an eating area.

Work clothes, tools, equipment, or other articles should not be stored in an eating area if they may contain, or have on them, workplace contaminants.

In highly transient and/or short-term operations, where it is not practicable to provide an eating area, providing the opportunity to access public facilities or providing other options to the workers may be acceptable. For example, public facilities such as malls may be acceptable where they are readily accessible. In remote areas, other options may include a vehicle, such as a crummy in a logging operation.

**Note:** The above recommendations, for which an employer is required to provide an eating area, would also apply to eating areas that are voluntarily provided by the employer for locations where section 4.84(2) does not apply.

**Exceptions**

The following sections of the *Regulation* set out restrictions on the consumption or storage of food and prohibit or restrict smoking; the requirements in these sections supersede any choices or options provided by section 4.84 of the *Regulation*.

Part	Section	
Chemical and Biological Substances	5.26	Storage area (hazardous substances not to be stored in an eating area)
	5.84	Prohibition (against eating or drinking in a work area involving lead, mercury, asbestos, silica, or pesticides)
Substance Specific Requirements	6.56	Personal hygiene (eating or drinking prohibited near cytotoxic drugs)
	6.92	Cleanup of residues (surfaces of food preparation and eating areas to be free of pesticide residues)
	6.95	Wash and shower facilities (to be separate from food preparation and eating areas for workers handling pesticides)
	6.100	Location (pesticides not to be stored in food preparation, food storage, or eating areas)
Diving, Fishing and Other Marine Operations	24.66	Contaminated environments (no food or drink in diving exclusion or contamination zones)
Laboratories	30.17	Personal protection (eating, drinking, and food storage restrictions in laboratories)

**G4.85(1)-1 Washroom facilities – Sufficient facilities**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.85(1) of the *OHS Regulation* ("Regulation") states:

Except as provided by subsection (2), the employer must ensure that a sufficient number of plumbed washroom facilities are readily available for workers.

...

In determining the number of facilities to provide, the calculations should be based on the anticipated largest number of workers on any shift at the workplace at one time; workers who spend more than 75% of their time away from the workplace may be excluded from the count. Recommendations for sufficient plumbed washroom facilities include the following:

- Where there are more than 9 workers, separate washrooms clearly signed for male and female workers. However, if the total number of workers on shift is 9 or fewer, or if a work area with 9 or fewer workers is located more than 60 metres (200 feet) from other washroom facilities, a single washroom for use by both male and female workers is generally suitable, provided it has a lockable door.
- In each female or male washroom, one toilet for 9 or fewer workers, two toilets for 10 to 24 workers, plus one more toilet for each additional 25 workers. If more than one toilet is required in a washroom for male workers, urinals may be substituted for half the recommended number of toilets.
- In each male or female washroom, one wash basin connected to a source of hot and cold water in each washroom containing one or two toilets and/or urinals, and at least one additional wash basin for each additional two such fixtures. If a large circular pedestal wash basin is provided, 60 centimetres (2 feet) of the circumference is generally considered equivalent to one wash basin.
- Washrooms should be designed so as to provide privacy for workers using the facilities.

#### ***G4.85(1)-2 Washroom facilities – Readily available***

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.85(1) of the *OHS Regulation* ("*Regulation*") states:

Except as provided by subsection (2), the employer must ensure that a sufficient number of plumbed washroom facilities are readily available for workers.

...

Section 4.85(1) requires washroom facilities to be "readily available for workers." Generally, the walking distance from a working area to a washroom should not be more than 60 metres (200 feet). In multi-storied workplaces, washrooms should not be more than one floor above or below the working area.

In a workplace where the washroom facilities are not in a part of the building occupied by or under the control of the employer, the employer must ensure suitable facilities are available to workers.

If public-use washrooms are available within walking distance at the workplace, the employer may utilize these facilities for workers provided the facilities are kept clean and sanitary and are of sufficient number to accommodate the total number of users, including the anticipated number of workers and the public. A risk assessment under the workplace violence provisions of the *Regulation* (section 4.28) may also be required where workers will be sharing washrooms with non-workers.

#### **G4.85(2) Washroom facilities where no plumbing is available**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.85(2) of the *OHS Regulation* ("Regulation") states:

(2) If plumbed washroom facilities cannot be provided because of the nature of the workplace or the nature of the work in which the worker is involved, the employer must

(a) provide access to portable washroom and hand-washing facilities, or

(b) make such other reasonable arrangements to accommodate workers as the circumstances allow, if access to portable washroom and hand-washing facilities cannot be provided.

Where access to or installation of plumbed facilities is not practical, portable toilets should be provided and maintained. The number of portable facilities (toilets and hand-washing facilities) should be sufficient for the number of workers, and the facilities should be readily accessible to workers. See OHS Guidelines [G4.85\(1\)-1](#) and [G.4.85\(1\)-2](#) for recommendations on the number of facilities and their location.

In highly transient or short-term operations, where it is not practicable to provide portable facilities, the needs of workers must be reasonably accommodated. Depending on the workplace location, workers may be given the opportunity to access alternative facilities such as those in parks or public buildings, or be provided with other options appropriate to the workplace location.

#### **G4.85(3) Maintenance of washroom facilities**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.85(3) of the *OHS Regulation* ("Regulation") states:

If washroom facilities are provided they must be

(a) maintained in proper working order,

(b) kept clean and sanitary, and

(c) provided with the supplies necessary for their use.

The employer must ensure washroom facilities are maintained to meet the requirements of section 4.85(3). If the washroom facilities are not under the employer's direct control, the employer should ensure that all facilities intended for use by workers are maintained to meet the requirements of section 4.85(3).

Each washroom should be provided with a suitable waste receptacle and with the supplies necessary for the use of the facilities, such as a supply of soap, toilet paper, and hand-drying towels or air dryers

#### **G4.86 Change areas**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.86 of the *OHS Regulation* ("Regulation") states:

If the employer requires the worker to change into protective work clothing at the workplace, the employer must ensure that adequate change areas are provided.

For the purposes of section 4.86 the following definitions apply:

- **"Protective work clothing"** means any clothing provided by the employer to protect the worker from hazards in the workplace or to prevent contamination of the workplace by materials the worker may bring into it on their personal clothing.
- **"Change area"** means a room or similar area within the workplace that will allow individual workers privacy while changing into or out of street clothes as necessary to properly use protective clothing.

Section 4.86 is intended to ensure that workers who are required to remove their street clothes and put on protective work clothing to perform their work are assured of privacy while changing. An adequate change area would also provide for a suitable place for workers to store their personal clothing and personal effects while they are working. A change area should contain or be in close proximity to individual lockers for the secure storage of the worker's clothing and personal effects.

Section 4.86 does not apply when workers put on coveralls, uniforms, or other work clothing or protective wear that does not require them to remove their street clothes.

Group change rooms may be provided but they should have provision for workers who wish personal privacy while changing clothes. A washroom with a lockable door or a room to which access can be restricted to ensure privacy may be suitable as a change room. A toilet stall with a locking door within a washroom would not normally be considered of sufficient size to function as a change area.

Certain sections of the *Regulation* set specific provisions for change areas, washing and/or shower facilities, and the handling of street clothing and protective clothing to ensure exposure to workplace contaminants is adequately controlled. The following table lists some examples:

Part	Section	
Chemical and Biological Substances	5.26	Work process involving substances such as lead, mercury, asbestos, silica, or pesticides
Substance Specific Requirements	6.55	Handling of personal protective equipment for workers exposed to cytotoxic drugs
	6.95	Provision of wash and shower facilities for personal hygiene for workers handling pesticides
	6.97	Handling of personal protective equipment for workers exposed to pesticides or pesticide residue

	6.107	Removing protective clothing for workers handling treated lumber
Diving, Fishing and Other Marine Operations	24.66	Diving operations at contaminated sites
Laboratories	30.17	Laboratories where toxic, radioactive, or biohazardous substances are handled

**G4.87 Unsafe water**

Issued January 1, 2005

Section 4.87 of the *OHS Regulation ("Regulation")* states:

The employer must display at every plumbed non-potable water source from which a person might reasonably believe he or she can safely drink, a notice that the water is unfit for human consumption.

The intent of section 4.87 is to ensure workers are aware that non-potable water sources in the workplace are not to be used as a source of drinking water or for the preparation of food. A plumbed water source, other than one connected only to a domestic water supply system, is to be considered unfit for consumption unless it is protected against contamination and has been tested and found to meet potable water standards. The drinking water standards adopted by the local public health authority will be used to determine if a plumbed water source is potable and thus fit for consumption.

Some typical examples of non-potable plumbed water systems are those using untreated surface or groundwater (well water) sources for irrigation, industrial processes or cooling water, and fire protection or sprinkler systems.

Plumbed water sources supplying non-potable water must have a notice that the water is unfit for consumption. This may be achieved by conspicuously posting near taps or other outlets notices such as "DO NOT DRINK" or using a suitable symbol. In addition, workers should be informed of the significance of the signs and/or symbols as part of their orientation to the workplace.

**Note:** Drinking fountains and water taps providing drinking (potable) water for workers should be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition to ensure the water provided is maintained fit for consumption.