

## CLR-INFO

### CLR Members,

Please find the latest updates on the current situation in the province.

## B.C. Budget 2022

### B.C.'s 2022-2023 budget released



Budget 2022 includes an updated forecast deficit of \$483 million for 2021-22, less than the \$9.7 billion projected in Budget 2021.

B.C.'s taxpayer-supported debt is projected to be \$61.7 billion at the end of fiscal year 2021-22. Debt is expected to increase to \$90.8 billion at the end of 2024-25, to finance the capital investments, such as schools, universities, hospitals, affordable

housing, highways, bridges, rapid transit and other taxpayer-supported infrastructure.

The smaller operating deficit reflects booming exports, hot housing markets, record low interest rates, and a double-digit increase in “nominal” GDP as the economy rebounded from the 2020 downturn amid higher inflation. The 36% jump in the value of B.C.'s merchandise exports in 2021 played a key role in moving the economy out the COVID crisis. The bulk of this export gain was due to the rising value of B.C.'s natural resource exports.

#### **Learn More:**

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022FIN0005-000251>

**2022-02-22-budget-2022-presentation.mp4** [Download \(1,505 MB\)](#)

## StrongerBC Economic Plan helps agritech grow



Changes to the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) Use Regulation are part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan that sets out to make British Columbia a global player in the agritech marketplace. The regulation allows for more intensive farming, known as vertical farming, which opens the door to additional opportunities on ALR land for farmers and farm businesses to produce more food for British Columbians.

The Government of B.C. is launching a Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network that will help farmers adopt the latest technology to increase profitability and environmental sustainability, while strengthening the provincial food system.

### **Learn More:**

To learn more about B.C. agritech, visit: <https://www.britishcolumbia.ca/TradeBCPortal/media/Marketing/bc-agritech-mit.pdf>

To learn more about the Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/25034>

## **Provincial Update**

### PHO Order on Workplace Safety updated

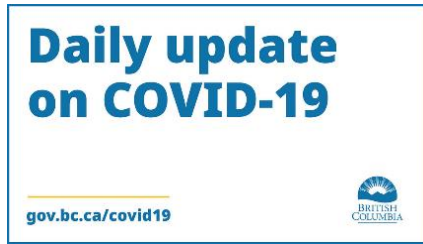


The provincial health officer (PHO) has updated the Provincial Health Officer Order on Workplace Safety, to support the transition of employees back into the workplace.

The previous version of the order contained a section that has been removed. That section required employers to allow workers to work from their private residence, if possible, given the nature of the work involved, unless the employer had an operational requirement to have the worker at the workplace.

All workplaces must continue to have COVID-19 safety plans in place, and the PHO's Face Coverings Order continues to apply to some workplaces.

## [COVID-19 pandemic update](#)



As of Wednesday, Feb. 23, 90.5% (4,513,284) of eligible people five and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 86.0% (4,284,366) have received their second dose.

In addition, 93.2% (4,320,374) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 90.6% (4,201,165) have received their second dose, and 55.0% (2,549,270) have received a third dose.

B.C. is reporting 799 new cases of COVID-19 today, for a total of 346,196 cases in the province.

### **Learn More:**

For the Feb. 23, 2022, presentation on B.C.'s COVID-19 rapid antigen test distribution strategy, visit: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Rapid\\_test\\_distribution\\_PPT.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Rapid_test_distribution_PPT.pdf)

For more information on the government's distribution of rapid tests, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/testing>

## [COVID-19 rapid tests for people 70+ to be available at pharmacies](#)



This week, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the BC Pharmacy Association, is shipping COVID-19 rapid tests to community pharmacies throughout the province. Starting as early as this Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, people aged 70 years and older can pick up one kit containing five tests every 28 days from participating pharmacies at no cost.

**Learn More:** For more information on the government's distribution of rapid tests: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/testing>

## **COVID Vaccination and Treatment**

### [Health Canada authorizes Medicago COVID-19 vaccine for adults 18 to 64 years of age](#)



Feb. 24, Health Canada authorized Medicago's Covifenz COVID-19 vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19 in adults 18 to 64 years of age. This is the first authorized COVID-19 vaccine developed by a Canadian-based company, and the first that uses a plant-based protein technology. Medicago's Covifenz is authorized as a two-dose regimen of 3.75 micrograms per dose, to be administered 21 days apart.

In clinical trials, the vaccine was found to be 71% effective against symptomatic infection and 100% effective against severe disease caused by COVID-19. These studies were conducted while there were multiple variants in circulation.

### **Related Links:**

[Medicago vaccine product page](#)

[COVID-19 vaccines and treatments portal](#)

[COVID-19 treatment outpatient virtual service launches for those at higher risk](#)



A new online assessment tool and virtual service has launched for people to see if they could receive and benefit from COVID-19 anti-viral treatments.

Two therapeutic treatments for COVID-19 are approved for people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 who are at high risk and who are not in hospital: Sotrovimab, which must be given through an infusion and requires a visit to a clinic or hospital; and Paxlovid, which is a course of anti-viral pills that can be taken at home.

**Learn More:** Find out if treatments are available to you: [gov.bc.ca/covidtreatments](http://gov.bc.ca/covidtreatments).

## Mental Health & Substance Use

[Addressing Opioid Use and Stigma in the Workplace](#)



Opioid use in the workplace can impact everyone’s right to a safe and healthy environment. To help workplaces take steps to address impairment, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has released two online courses.

Opioids: What Employers Need to Know introduces employers to the impacts of opioid use in the workplace. Employers and supervisors will learn about their specific duties, the

importance of addressing substance use through a policy, and the steps they should take when possible impairment is observed.

Opioids: What Workers Need to Know introduces employees to the impacts of opioid use in the workplace. The course will help workers learn about these impacts and steps to follow to understand opioid use, reduce stigma, and provide appropriate support in the workplace.

Both courses are available on the [CCOHS website](#) in English and French.

**Related Products:** [Online Course Raises Awareness About Substance Use and Stigma in the Workplace](#)



Stay safe,  
Ken McCormack | President & CEO



CONSTRUCTION LABOUR RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF BC

