

Facilities Management: Low Carbon Resilience & Environmental Sustainability

1. Introduction

[Climate Change](#) and the [Ecological Crisis](#) are creating a health emergency. Human health is inextricably linked to the health of our planet and its natural systems. [Low Carbon Resilience](#) and [Environmental Sustainability](#) mean minimizing negative impacts on the environment and maximizing resilience to changes in the [Climate](#) and ecosystems.

Providence Health Care (PHC) and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH) are committed to advancing Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability for health care facilities. This Policy relates primarily to facilities management, while acknowledging interconnectedness with health service delivery, supply chain, public health, and more.

1.1. Purpose

This Policy aims to:

- Accelerate progress on Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability by strengthening the core objectives within which supporting protocols and procedures are developed; and
- Support other organizational priorities linked to Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability, including [Reconciliation](#) with [Indigenous Peoples](#), [Health Equity](#), and [Planetary Health](#).

1.2. Scope

This Policy applies to all [Staff](#) who carry out business for and with PHC and VCH.

2. Policy

2.1. Four Categories of Focus

PHC and VCH will consider Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability for health care facilities across four interconnected categories:

- Leadership;
- Low [Carbon Emissions](#);
- [Climate Resilience](#); and
- Environmental Sustainability.

2.2. Core Objectives

The core objectives of this Policy and related initiatives include:

- Reducing energy use and Carbon Emissions without compromising delivery of care;
- Understanding and managing [Climate Risk](#) to facilities and operations, and enhancing Climate Resilience;
- Advancing Environmental Sustainability across all areas of operations;
- Promoting a culture of leadership, innovation, and partnership related to Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability for health care facilities, including partnerships with Indigenous Peoples;
- Promoting Truth and Reconciliation and Health Equity; and
- Embedding a Planetary Health lens in service, policy planning, and decisions.

2.3. Leadership

PHC and VCH will collaborate to further the Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability objectives and commitments identified in this Policy.

PHC and VCH will partner with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations to further the objectives and commitments identified in this Policy as part of legislative obligations and provincial commitments to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, Truth and Reconciliation, and Health Equity.

PHC and VCH will demonstrate leadership with respect to Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability in health care facilities while engaging the health care community in a collaborative approach towards the pursuit of Planetary Health.

2.4. Low Carbon Emissions

PHC and VCH will advance Climate Change [Mitigation](#) and reduce the Carbon Emissions of health care facilities and operations by:

- Increasing energy efficiency, eliminating where possible reliance on fossil fuels, and managing embodied carbon through design and operational measures;
- Adopting green building standards and integrating net-zero design strategies into new construction and infrastructure retrofits; and
- Assessing and reporting on waste, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions to increase organizational knowledge of the environmental and financial benefits of this work and supporting continuous improvement.

2.5. Climate Resilience

PHC and VCH will advance Climate Change [Adaptation](#) and move towards a Climate Resilient health care system by:

- Working with Indigenous partners to ensure Climate Change Adaptation strategies are informed by [Indigenous Knowledges](#) on Climate Resilience;
- Assessing Climate Risk for major capital projects and designing facilities to be resilient to future Climate conditions;
- Understanding and managing Climate Risk at existing facilities through infrastructure retrofits and operational strategies; and
- Supporting external efforts to enhance Climate Resilience, including emergency preparedness planning, strengthening of the supply chain, population and public health initiatives, and community Climate Change Adaptation.

2.6. Environmental Sustainability

PHC and VCH will advance Environmental Sustainability across the health system for the health of people, place, and planet by:

2.6.1. Transportation

- Supporting Staff commuting by sustainable transportation modes (e.g., walking, rolling, biking, transit, and carpooling);
- Supporting the switch to zero emissions vehicles, including the provision of charging infrastructure in new and existing buildings; and
- Aligning transportation infrastructure planning and strategy development with national and provincial legislative requirements.

2.6.2. Materials

- Reducing construction and operational waste generation through prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling ([Circular Economy](#));
- Managing infrastructure and operational wastes to minimize emissions produced and other impacts on environmental and human health;
- Supporting the adoption of innovative processes and practices for waste avoidance and reduction; and
- Promoting Environmental Sustainability in procurement practices.

2.6.3. Water

- Minimizing water consumption to reduce demand on natural resources and impact on the environment;
- Prioritizing system design and equipment selection that supports sustainable water management strategies; and
- Eliminating the discharge of pollutants into the wastewater system.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Executive Leadership

Executive Leadership will:

- Provide active and visible leadership on Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability, and communicate the importance of these topics in relation to other organizational priorities, including Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, Health Equity, and Planetary Health;
- Incorporate Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability into all decision making processes;
- Support Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability through innovation and appropriate budget and needs based planning; and
- Support partnerships and collaborations with other organizations that have prioritized Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability.

3.2. Managers and Directors

Managers and Directors will:

- Support Staff as they pursue education and professional development related to Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability;
- Incorporate Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability into organizational policies, procedures, and job descriptions, liaising with the appropriate teams and resources for guidance;
- Incorporate Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability criteria into decision making processes that impact work plans, service delivery, and equipment use; and
- Monitor, measure, and report on Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability efforts in accordance with relevant Climate Change legislation and organizational reporting.

3.3. Facilities Management

Facilities Management will:

- Apply a regional approach to Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability through planning, design, procurement, construction, and operations;
- Prepare PHC and VCH to respond to evolving legislation, regulatory requirements, and policies at national, provincial, regional, and local levels;
- Support quantification of costs, benefits, and risks associated with Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability initiatives, plans, and strategies;

- Generate awareness about Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability, and educate and empower Staff to make meaningful contributions to reducing the environmental impact of the health system;
- Report annual progress towards Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability goals; and
- Report annual GHG emissions through the Climate Change Accountability Report (CCAR).

3.4. Staff

Staff will:

- Identify, role model, and promote implementation of workplace activities, programs, and practices related to Low Carbon Resilience and Environmental Sustainability;
- Support clients to choose more Environmentally Sustainable health care; and
- Participate in relevant training and educational opportunities, where provided.

4. Compliance

PHC and VCH will monitor and measure their environmental sustainability efforts.

Lack of compliance by a service provider may result in a breach of contract or impact contract renewal.

Failure to comply with this Policy may also be reported under whistleblower or safe reporting policies in section 5.1 or [Public Interest Disclosure Act](#) related policies and procedures in sections 5.1 and 5.2, where the lack of compliance amounts to a wrongdoing under either type of policy.

5. Supporting Documents

5.1. Related Policies

PHC

- [Public Interest Disclosure Act Policy](#)
- [Safe Reporting Policy](#)

VCH

- [Public Interest Disclosure Act Policy](#)
- [Whistleblower Policy](#)

5.2. Guidelines/Procedures/Forms

PHC

- [Public Interest Disclosure Act Procedure](#)

VCH

- [Vancouver Coastal Health Authority & Fraser Health Authority \(2022\). Climate Change & Health Adaptation Framework.](#)

Other

- [GreenCare \(2024\). Climate Resilience Guidelines for BC Health Facility Planning & Design.](#)
- [GreenCare \(2022\). Low Carbon Resilience & Environmental Sustainability Guidelines for Health Care New Construction.](#)

6. Definitions

“Adaptation” is the process of adjusting to the current impacts of Climate Change and preparing for ongoing climate-related shocks, disruptions, and trends.

“Carbon Emissions” are the equivalent of emissions expressed in metric tonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide (tCO₂e).

“Circular Economy” is a model based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. It prioritizes the reuse, sharing, and repurposing of goods, discourages and delays disposal of goods, and creates new economies for sharing and recycling.

“Climate” is the average weather in a place (variables include temperature, precipitation, wind) over a period of time (typically, over 30 years).

“Climate Change” refers to a change in the state of the Climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity and alters the composition of the global atmosphere. Climate Change is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods (typically, decades or longer).

“Climate Resilience” is the capacity to prepare for, withstand, recover, and grow from Climate related stressors, shocks, and disruptions.

“Climate Risk” refers to the potential for adverse consequences for human or ecological systems. Risk results from dynamic interactions between Climate related hazards with the exposure and vulnerability of the affected human or ecological system to the hazards.

“Ecological Crisis” refers to a state of human induced ecological disorder that could lead to the destruction of this planet’s ecosystem to the extent that human life will at least be seriously impaired for generations, if not destroyed.

“Environmental Sustainability” refers to responsible interactions with the environment to avoid depletion or degradation of natural resources and allow for long-term environmental quality and regeneration.

“Health Equity” is the absence of unfair systems and policies that cause health inequalities. The reduction of inequalities and increase in access to opportunities and conditions conducive to health for all.

“Indigenous Knowledges” means the cultural, social, environmental, and spiritual understanding and information Indigenous Peoples have collected and shared across generations, uniquely tied to the places they live and have lived since time immemorial.

“Indigenous Peoples” means the first inhabitants of a geographic area. In Canada, Indigenous peoples include those who may identify as First Nations (status and non-status), Métis, or Inuit.

“Low Carbon Resilience” means pursuing Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation simultaneously, while also considering the co-benefits of each.

“Mitigation” of Climate Change is human intervention to prevent or reduce emissions into the atmosphere or enhance natural capacity to capture emissions.

“Planetary Health” is a concept that recognizes the interdependent relationship between human health and the health of our planet.

“Reconciliation” refers to building a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, and partnership. Reconciliation is an ongoing process, not a destination. Reconciliation includes incorporating principles of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

“Staff” means all employees (including management and leadership), medical staff (includes physicians, dentists, midwives, and nurse practitioners), resident doctors, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors, researchers, and other service providers engaged by PHC and VCH.

7. References

Climate Action Secretariat. (2022). Climate Resilience Framework & Standards for Public Sector Buildings.

Climate Action Secretariat. (2022). Electric Vehicle Ready Building Standard.

Climate Action Secretariat. (2022). Green Building Standards.

Climate Action Secretariat. (2022). Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standard for Buildings

[Ministry of Environment & Climate Change. \(2018\). CleanBC.](#)

[Ministry of Environment & Climate Change. \(2021\). CleanBC Roadmap to 2030.](#)

[Ministry of Environment & Climate Change. \(2022\). Climate Preparedness & Adaptation Strategy.](#)

[Ministry of Finance. \(2022\). Environmental, Social & Governance Framework for Capital.](#)

[Ministry of Health. \(2024\). Health Capital Policy Manual, Chapter 11: Low Carbon, Climate Resilient & Sustainable Health Facilities.](#)

[Ministry of Health. \(2021\). Health Capital Policy Manual, Chapter 14: Use of Wood in Health Care Facilities.](#)

7.1. Legislation

- [Climate Change Accountability Act](#), SBC 2007, c 42.
- [Carbon Neutral Government Regulation](#), BC Reg 392/2008.
- [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), SBC 2019, c 44.
- [Environmental Management Act](#), SBC 2003, c 53.
- [Low Carbon Fuels Act](#), SBC 2022, c 21.
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act](#), SBC 2018, c 22.
- [Zero-Emissions Vehicles Act](#), SBC 2019, c 29.

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	3.0	09-APR-2025	New Title: Facilities Management: Low Carbon Resilience & Environmental Sustainability. Refined scope: primarily focuses on facilities management while recognizing its links to health service delivery, supply chains, and public health; introduces 4 categories of focus; and identifies practical initiatives to achieve goals.	Facilities Management
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