

February 14, 2022

This letter of recommendation has been updated and replaces that which was posted on October 4, 2021.

To Employers, Businesses and Organizations (“workplaces”) in Huron and Perth Counties:

Thank you for all your efforts thus far to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in your workplaces. Your efforts have kept our communities safer, however with the arrival of several COVID-19 variants it is important to highlight that public measures are still required. Thank you for your continued leadership and cooperation in this important work to keep our communities safe.

This letter contains Recommendations from the Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) Medical Officer of Health for all businesses and organizations permitted to be open¹. It also brings to your attention important requirements under the *Reopening Ontario Act* that you must follow.

This letter covers HPPH recommendations and highlights continued provincial requirements in the following categories:

- Workplace Safety Plan
- Policies (including vaccination policies)
- Screening
- Face coverings & PPE
- Carpooling
- Hand washing and environmental cleaning
- HVAC systems
- Contact information in event of cases and outbreaks
- Signage
- Capacity limits and physical distancing

Workplaces in Huron and Perth Counties must be familiar with and follow all applicable legislation under the Reopening Ontario Act. This would include [Ontario Regulation 263/20: Rules for Areas in Step 2 or Ontario Regulation 364/20 – Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the RoadMap Exit Stage](#). You must ensure all requirements and specific rules pertaining to your sector are followed.

The following workplaces should look to their sector specific legislation, directives and/or guidelines currently governing them, as well as any HPPH recommendations and/or letters of instruction made specifically to their sectors:

- Health care providers and health care entities as defined in Section 77.7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990, who are subject to the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s Directives issued thereunder;

¹ Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) issues this letter to persons responsible for a business or organization within Huron and Perth Counties permitted to be open under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 (ROA) as amended, and associated Regulations, as amended as well as any other emergency order and/or public health statute including the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9 that is in force. If your business or organization is subject to a Section 22 Order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7 you must continue to adhere to the requirements of the Order.

- Schools and Private schools within the meaning of the Education Act, required to operate in accordance with the Covid-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022);
- Ontario provincial post-secondary institutions;
- Childcare settings licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014; and
- Recreational and Day or overnight camps for children.

It is important for us to all work together to achieve the goal of limiting COVID-19 infections in our communities, and preventing outbreaks which could lead to closures of workplaces and/or additional public health measures.

LIMITING SPREAD OF COVID-19

Workplace safety plan

Required: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires workplaces to create and Implement COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan. (Schedule 1, Section 3.3)

The COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan shall describe how screening, physical distancing, masks or face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, the wearing of personal protective equipment and preventing and controlling crowding will be implemented. To assist with development of your workplace safety plan, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has created a “Workplace Safety Plan Builder.” This tool can be accessed here:

<https://www.workplacesafetyplanbuilder.labour.gov.on.ca/>.

Policies

Recommendation: HPPH recommends that all workplaces consider developing policies and procedures to facilitate implementation of your COVID-19 workplace safety plan. Policies and procedures should be communicated to staff, via training sessions or other means of communication and should be enforced. Any policies developed should be referenced within your safety plan.

Such policies may include, but are not limited to:

- screening of staff, essential visitors, and patrons
- mask and additional PPE use where indicated (e.g. eye protection)
- personal hygiene
- cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces
- physical distancing
- vaccination policies (*see below*)

You are encouraged to use the resources provided in the “Step-by-Step COVID-19 Prevention: Business and Organization Tool Kit” created by Huron Perth Public Health to develop policies. Additional workplace guidance and resources related to these recommendations are available on our website at: www.hpph.ca/workplace.

Vaccination policies

Recommendation: HPPH strongly recommends that all workplaces permitted to be open create, implement and ensure compliance with a COVID-19 vaccination policy developed by you with respect to your employees.

HPPH recommends that your COVID-19 vaccination policy, at minimum, strongly encourages all eligible employees to receive vaccination as per provincial guidance on COVID-19 vaccination and provides consideration to allow time off to do so.

Workplaces choosing to implement a mandatory vaccination policy are strongly encouraged to seek legal counsel. Workplaces may use the provincial medical exemption template:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_sample_medical_exemption_template.pdf.

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires certain workplaces permitted to be open to ensure that each patron who enters an area of the premises of the workplace that is described in that subsection to provide, at the point of entry, proof of identification and of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. (Schedule 1, Section 2(2.1))

- A full list of high-risk public settings where proof of vaccination is required prior to entry can be found in [Schedule 1 of O. Reg. 364/20](#).
- Vaccination policies must outline how your workplace will implement the Province's proof of vaccination requirement for patrons entering the indoor areas of your business should you be required to do so. Resources to support this can be found: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/guidance_proof_of_vaccination_for_businesses_and_organizations.pdf

Screening

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires workplaces to implement active Screening and passive screening as outlined under Schedule 1, Section 2(3)(a, b). At this time, these symptoms include: fever, cough, shortness of breath, new disorder of taste and/or smell

- Plus fatigue and muscle aches/pain in adults
- Plus nausea/vomiting/diarrhea in children

Recommendation: Screening practices should include messaging that people with the following symptoms also stay home and seek guidance from their primary care provider:

- sore throat
- runny nose
- nasal congestion
- abdominal pain (persistent, ongoing and not related to other known conditions such as gastrointestinal reflux or menstrual cramps)
- headache (new, unusual, unexplained)
- pink eye

People with these symptoms must not return to work and/or enter the business/organization until 24 hours symptoms free (48 hours symptoms free for abdominal pain/diarrhea/vomiting)

Face coverings/Personal Protective Equipment

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires workplaces to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or face coverings are worn as source protection by all employees. (PPE includes masks and eye protection where indicated under legislation). Schedule 1, Section 2(3.1) and (7)

Ensure face coverings are worn by all visitors/patrons/clients/public (subject to certain exemptions as specified in O. Reg. **263/20** and O. Reg. 364/20 under Schedule 1, Section 2(4)). An appropriate face covering is considered one which covers the nose, mouth and chin (cloth face covering or surgical grade mask). A face shield alone is not considered adequate personal protective equipment by HPPH.

Carpooling

Recommendation: HPPH recommends that workplaces reduce instances of more than one individual per vehicle for driving associated with work. If an instance of carpooling is unavoidable:

- ensure face coverings (preferably medical masks) are supplied to and used by each individual
- ensure distancing to the degree most possible (e.g. one person in the back diagonal from the driver)
- ensure the use of increased ventilation to the outdoors (i.e., through a partially open window) in vehicles, where possible

Hand Washing and Environmental Cleaning

Recommendation: HPPH recommend that all workplaces remind staff on the importance of excellent respiratory etiquette (e.g. cough and sneeze into sleeve). Signage is available in HPPH's business and organization tool kit.

Ensure supplies and facilities are provided for adequate hand hygiene to take place in work and rest/eating areas within the workplace including the supply of 60-90% alcohol-based hand rub for workers and patrons.

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires workplaces to ensure frequent environmental cleaning in all areas accessible to the public, including washrooms, check-out counters, concession stands, and other high-touch surfaces and similar amenities (i.e., doorknobs, accessible/elevator buttons, pay machines, etc.) (Schedule 1, section 7). Disinfectants with a drug identification number (D.I.N.) must be used while ensuring manufacturer instructions for use are followed. Cleaning is recommended twice per day at a minimum.

Ensure hand sinks are stocked appropriately with liquid soap, hot and cold running water and paper towels

HVAC systems

Recommendation: HPPH recommends that workplaces conduct a regular review of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in the workplace to ensure that HVAC and supplemental ventilation/filtration systems are regularly maintained and in proper working order with the goal of

HVAC system and unit optimization. This can be completed by the property owner or landlord of the premises of the workplace/organization.

(https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/nrcan/files/canmetenergy/pdf/HVAC-Self-Assessment-Tool_Engl-Final.pdf)

Signage

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires workplaces to post signage regarding capacity limits (various schedules) and passive screening (Schedule 1, section 2(3)(a)) requirements at all accessible entrances and throughout your workplace.

Recommendation: HPPH recommends that workplaces ensure additional signs are posted regarding mask use and physical distancing (e.g. use of floor markings).

Capacity limits and physical distancing

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires workplaces to ensure capacity limits and physical distancing for visitors/patrons/clients/public is in alignment with their sector and/or other applicable legislation made under the Reopening Ontario Act. (Various Schedules)

Requirement: Ontario Regulation 263/20 and 364/20 requires that workplaces ensure workers maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres between themselves and others occurs throughout the workplace, where reasonably possible. (Various Schedules). This includes during all meal breaks and rest periods. Measures to support physical distancing include but are not limited to:

- One-way walkways and workflows shall be provided where applicable, with visual aids (e.g. floor and/or wall markings) to reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between individuals, including between workers.
- Stagger shifts and breaks and/or adjust production schedules to reduce occupancy to limit only as many persons as can be accommodated such that 2 metres distancing between persons can be maintained where reasonably possible.
- Create work cohorts where reasonably possible to effectively reduce the number of physical interactions between individuals.

All workplaces are reminded that in addition to the above you are required to abide by and support the enforcement of any other legislated requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990, instructions, directions and guidance provided by HPPH, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Government of Ontario and/or the Government of Canada pertaining to COVID-19 with respect to case investigations and outbreak management related to communicable diseases, including COVID-19, conducted by HPPH. This may include but is not limited to:

- accurate and updated contact information for all workers (and patrons if prescribed in the Reopening Ontario Act and/or its Regulations or this letter of recommendation)
- site plans and staff schedules
- adherence to isolation and/or quarantine orders in accordance with any local public health unit and/or provincial and/or federal authority

I want to thank you for your efforts so far to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to reinforce with you that it is essential to keep up your vigilance and diligence. This is key to ensuring continued safe

operation of your business as well as contributing to a successful community reopening and to safeguard against novel coronavirus (COVID-19) circulation now and into the fall and beyond. HPPH will continue to monitor rates of local COVID-19 activity, and if required may update this letter of recommendation and/or issue new instructions pursuant to Ontario Regulation **263/20 and 364/20**.

Workplace guidance and resources related to these recommendations are available on our website at www.hpph.ca/workplace. For more information, call HPPH at 1-888-221-2133.

Sincerely,

<original signed by>

Dr Miriam Klassen
Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Important Terms

“worker” means any employee, independent contractor or tradesperson (including ‘temporary’ agency worker), manager, director, officer, owner, partner, shareholder, volunteer, student, inspector, or any other person engaged in the business or organization activity at the workplace.

“workplace” means any land, premises, work vehicle, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works, volunteers or donates their time. It also includes the terms business and organization.

“mask and face covering” means that which is referenced under the Province of Ontario’s COVID-19 regulatory framework requirement, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, which require a mask or face covering to be worn “in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin.” A face covering means a medical mask or a non-medical mask or other face coverings such as a bandana, a scarf or cloth (including hijab and niqab) that covers the mouth, and nose ensuring a barrier that limits community transmission of COVID-19.

“indoor areas” means those indoor portions of any workplace that are openly accessible to members of the public and/or workers that are used for the purposes of offering goods or services to members of the public and conducting daily duties associated with the workplace.

“person” means any individual including but not limited to customers, patrons, employees, contractors or visitors who enter the workplace.