

Office of the Medical Officer of Health  
City of Ottawa  
100 Constellation Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2G 6J8

Date: December 18, 2020

To: All employers in the City of Ottawa permitted to be open under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and Related Regulations, and all persons responsible for a retail business or shopping mall in the City of Ottawa

Re: Ottawa Public Health instructions on workplace safety, physical distancing and masking, and capacity limits

---

I want to acknowledge and thank you for all your efforts being made to protect the health and safety of workers, volunteers, patrons, and customers. Given continued COVID-19 infections in the City of Ottawa, more actions are needed to reduce spread/transmission of COVID-19. Key risk factors of potential transmission include close contact, closed spaces, crowded places, prolonged exposure, and forceful exhalation. Physical distancing plays a key role to reduce the risk of gatherings (crowds), particularly in closed spaces, and has been proven to limit COVID-19 spread/transmission. Accordingly, I am issuing these Instructions to all employers in the City of Ottawa permitted to be open under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and Related Regulations, and all persons responsible for retail businesses or shopping mall in the City of Ottawa requiring them to take the additional measures set out in this letter to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

These Instructions are being provided pursuant to Section 2(2) of Schedule 1 to Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3 made under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, S.O. 2020, c. 17 (“the *Reopening Ontario Act*”), formerly a regulation made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (“EMCPA”) and now a continued section 7.0.2 order under the *Reopening Ontario Act*.

Note that the following businesses or organizations are currently exempt from these Instructions due to sector-specific legislation, directives and/or guidelines governing COVID-19 measures in these workplaces:

- (i) A licensed child care program that is in compliance with guidance issued by the Ministry of Education;
- (ii) Health care providers and health care entities as defined in Section 77.7 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* who are subject to the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s Directives issued thereunder;

- (iii) Personal care service providers as described in and regulated by O. Reg. 364/20;
- (iv) Schools and school boards licensed under the *Education Act*; and,
- (v) Schools and private schools within the meaning of the *Education Act*, that are operated in accordance with a return to school direction issued by the Ministry of Education and approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

To the extent that anything in these Instructions conflicts with other applicable Provincial legislation or directives, those Provincial requirements prevail. Where conflicts do not exist, these Instructions are additional to any applicable Provincial requirements.

Effective December 23, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., I am instructing all persons responsible for a business or organization in the City of Ottawa to implement the following measures:

## **A. WORKPLACE SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Requirements for Employers**

1. If two (2) or more people test positive for COVID-19 (e.g., two or more cases) are identified in connection with your workplace premise:
  - a. Immediately notify Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-2424 ext. 26325 if there are two or more people that test positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day interval in connection with your workplace premises.
  - b. Provide contact information for a designated contact person at the workplace premise and ensure that person is readily available to communicate with Ottawa Public Health and implement any additional measures immediately as required by Ottawa Public Health.
  - c. Ensure that accurate and updated contact information for all workers (and clients if prescribed in O. Reg. 364/20) is available to be produced to Ottawa Public Health within 24 hours of request from Ottawa Public Health in support of case management and contact tracing requirements for COVID-19.
  - d. Notify the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development and/or other relevant government authorities. Further information about employer's responsibilities with respect to COVID-19 at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-coronavirus-and-workplace-health-and-safety>.
  - e. Cooperate with infection prevention and control personnel from Ottawa Public Health including allowing entry into the workplace premise for inspection, to support enhanced infection prevention and control measures and recommendations.
2. In order to encourage honest and forthright reporting of COVID-19 symptoms and/or contact amongst employees, ensure that all employees are aware of any benefits and/or pay to which they may be entitled in the event that they must isolate due to having symptoms of COVID-19, being tested for COVID-19, or

being a close contact of someone infected with COVID-19. To assist employers OPH has created a resource for employers that describes different benefits here: [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19)

## **B. PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MASKING INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Requirements for Employers**

3. Ensure that physical distancing of workers takes place by at least two (2) metres throughout the workplace, where reasonably possible, and during eating and rest periods (e.g., lunchrooms, changerooms, washrooms). One-way walkways and workflows shall be provided where applicable to reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between individuals, including between workers. Examples of workflows include, but is not limited to, directional arrows and floor markers for two (2) metres distance.
4. Use physical barriers<sup>1</sup> (such as plexiglass) where reasonably possible, particularly in environments where physical distancing cannot take place.
5. For the indoor area of the premises, which is accessible to members of the public, ensure each worker wears a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, and as best as possible, maintains a physical distance of at least two (2) metres from every other person including both workers and members of the public while in the indoor area. Exceptions to mandatory face coverings are permitted in accordance with provincial regulations and the City of Ottawa Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law.
  - a. Patrons from the same households are not required to maintain a physical distance of at least two (2) metres from each other, but are required to maintain at least two (2) metres of physical distance from persons outside their household
6. For the indoor area of the premises, which is not accessible to members of the public, ensure each worker wears a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, unless they are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two (2) metres from every other worker. Exceptions to mandatory face coverings are permitted in accordance with provincial regulations and the City of Ottawa Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law.

---

<sup>1</sup> Physical barriers should include:

- Adequate dimensions that protect the breathing zone of the tallest person using the partition. The breathing zone can be thought of as a bubble with a radius of 30 cm extending out from the mouth and nose;
- Pass-throughs or openings that are as small as possible and not located in the breathing zone of either user (these do not include speaking ports or grates);
- Secure installations, such that they cannot tip or fall, and do not block or impede emergency egress;
- Surface-mounted partitions with small openings and wings/surrounds being preferred over hanging partitions that can swing or waft air; and
- A plan for regular cleaning at least daily with mild soap and water and a compatible disinfectant.

Adapted from: The National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health [Physical Barriers for COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in Commercial Settings: May 2020](#)

- a. Please note this masking requirement is a minimum standard and Ottawa Public Health recommends each worker *strongly considers* continuing to wear a mask at all times when sharing the same enclosed airspace (e.g., same indoor room), even if greater than two (2) metres apart.

### **C. CAPACITY LIMIT INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Requirements for Shopping Malls**

7. Ensure that physical distancing of two (2) metres is maintained by patrons and mall staff in common areas, stores, washrooms, hallways, entrances, etc., at all times.
  - a. Actively manage all line-ups and congregation of patrons and ensure all patrons waiting inside common areas of the mall or outside the mall maintain physical distancing of at least two (2) metres.
  - b. Patrons from the same households are not required to maintain a physical distance of at least two (2) metres from each other, but are required to maintain at least two (2) metres of physical distance from persons outside their household.
8. Ensure all stores within the mall comply with the requirements in the below Sections 9 and 10 of this Letter of Instructions.

#### **Requirements for Retail Businesses located within and outside of Shopping Malls**

9. Set a maximum capacity for patrons in the retail business that effectively supports maintaining a physical distance of two (2) metres among patrons and staff, and actively monitor compliance with the said capacity limit at all entrances.
  - a. Ensure that physical distancing of two (2) metres is maintained by patrons and store staff in common areas, washrooms, hallways, entrances, etc., at all times.
  - b. Actively manage all line-ups and congregation of patrons and ensure all patrons waiting inside and outside the retail business maintain physical distancing of at least two (2) metres.
  - c. Patrons from the same households are not required to maintain a physical distance of at least two (2) metres from each other, but are required to maintain at least two (2) metres of physical distance from persons outside their household.
10. Post a copy of the maximum capacity and square footage/metre of retail space of the establishment in a conspicuous place in the retail business where it is most likely to come to the attention of individuals attending in the location. To assist businesses OPH has created a resource that describes considerations for capacity limits here: [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19)

## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Instructions:

“**employer**” means a person, company, or organization that employs people or has under its service a person engaged in work.

“**worker**” means any employee, independent contractor, manager, director, officer, owner, partner, shareholder, volunteer, student or any other person engaged in the business or organization’s activity at the workplace.

“**workplace**” means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works.

## ENFORCEMENT

Please be reminded that you are required to comply with the additional measures above pursuant to regulations under the *Reopening Ontario Act* including any successor legislation or regulations.

These Instructions, including any revisions to these instructions, are available on the City of Ottawa public website: [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19)

Inquiries about these Instructions should be directed to:

- Ottawa Public Health: 613-580-6744 or [healthsante@ottawa.ca](mailto:healthsante@ottawa.ca)
- Municipal Law Enforcement: 3-1-1

Ottawa Public Health posts information regarding how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 on its website that can assist local businesses and organizations in operating safely: [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19)

These additional measures are intended to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 where collective efforts of various sectors, including workplaces, are required to protect our communities.

Sincerely,



---

Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health