

September 21, 2020

To Employers, Businesses and Organizations in Huron and Perth counties:

**UPDATE: Huron Perth Public Health Instructions to Persons Responsible for a Business or Organization permitted to be open under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 (ROA)* and related Regulations, or otherwise.**

This letter outlines updated public health instructions for businesses and organizations that are permitted to be open per ROA, including [Ontario Regulation 364/20 – Rules for Areas in Stage 3](#) or other such applicable legislation. The purpose of these instructions is to outline your responsibilities as required by Huron Perth Public Health. We are committed to supporting businesses to be successful during the COVID-19 pandemic and will provide supplementary advice and resources when it becomes available to us.

As the Medical Officer of Health, the following are my Instructions, pursuant to *O. Reg 364/20 s. 2(2)* (or any other applicable legislation) to all employers and persons responsible for businesses or organizations permitted to be open within the Huron Perth Public Health service area.

**For Your Employees you will require that:**

1. Active screening practices for employees be implemented. Minimum screening requirements are:
  - Using/developing a screening tool that includes checking for COVID-19 symptoms, travel, contact with a COVID-19 case or someone being tested.
  - That screening is completed prior to staff commencing their shift.
  - That active screening records be maintained for a minimum of 15 days; this will support contact tracing in the event a staff member becomes ill.
  - If employee(s) fail screening<sup>1</sup> then they must be sent home and advised to seek medical direction and/or assessment.
2. Employees who are ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must stay home and seek medical advice and/or assessment.
3. Employees who have travelled out of the country or have been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 must stay home and follow public health direction.
4. Excellent hygiene practices are promoted and enforced. This includes hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette.

5. Effective measures are in place to maintain 2 metre physical distancing amongst all employees and customers, to the fullest extent possible.
6. Policies and procedures are developed and communicated to staff, via training sessions or other means of communication to ensure COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures are in place at the business. This includes but is not limited to screening, mask wearing, limited customers at the business, facilitating uni-directional flow of customers with aids such as floor markings, cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces and physical distancing.
7. Ensure that all individuals wear a mask (for example, a homemade cloth mask or face covering<sup>2</sup>) where a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained throughout all areas of the business and when employees work in public spaces of the business where suitable barriers are not present, unless the nature of the work requires the use of a medical mask.

Further, the following are my additional updated instructions to owners or operators of all indoor commercial and indoor public spaces<sup>3</sup> and to all public transit services in the Huron Perth Public Health service area:

**For Your Customers you will require that:**

1. Screening practices for all persons<sup>4</sup> entering the business are implemented including, at minimum, posting clear signage about not entering the business if ill or if contact has been had with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and/or who has been instructed to self-isolate by public health or a healthcare provider.
2. Alcohol-based hand rub is available at all entrances and exits for the use of all persons entering or exiting the business if hand washing facilities (i.e. sink) is not available.
3. Best efforts are made to create physical spaces that ensure a 2 metre distance between all people.
4. Best efforts are made to require persons to wear a face covering and that the face covering is worn inside the business at all times, unless it is reasonably required to temporarily remove the face covering for services provided by the business.<sup>5</sup> Some people cannot wear a mask for various reasons and are exempt from wearing a face covering (see **Who is Exempt?**). Proof of exemption is not required and should never be asked for by an owner/operator or other visitor.

**To achieve the above you must:**

- a) Develop and implement policies to request all persons entering an indoor commercial and/or indoor public Space to:
  - wear a face covering
  - practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
  - follow premise rules (e.g. maintaining physical distancing and following floor markings)
- b) Enact and enforce any policy noted above in “good faith” and use it as a means to educate people on COVID-19 prevention measures including, but not limited to the use of face coverings in indoor spaces.

- c) Encourage persons to wear their own cloth face covering. If a business is supplying masks, we encourage that medical masks be preserved for health care environments; please consider other options for face coverings.
- d) Post appropriate visible signage indicating that face coverings are required inside the business and physical distancing measures must be followed.
- e) Ensure that employees follow all COVID-19 prevention policies and wear masks if their job requires them to enter public spaces of the business unless they are protected by a plexiglass or other suitable barrier.
- f) Ensure that all employees are aware of all workplace policies and are trained on your business' expectations.

### **Who is Exempt?**

The following people shall be exempt from wearing a face covering:

- Children under the age of two years
- Children who cannot understand the need for a mask, refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
- A person who is unable to put on or remove their face covering without assistance
- A person whose breathing would be inhibited in any way by wearing a face covering
- A person who, for any other physical or mental health medical reason, cannot safely wear a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to people with respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties, difficulties hearing or sensory processing disorders, mental health concerns.
- A person for whom a religious reason prevents them from wearing a face covering that is compliant with the definition of face covering in these Instructions.

### **Enforcement**

Huron Perth Public Health will be taking a progressive enforcement approach to ensure compliance with these instructions. Enforcement measures include focusing on education, however, pursuant to the ROA, people and businesses who do not comply with the above-noted requirements may be fined where significant non-compliance concerns are identified.

Please be reminded of your responsibilities under Schedules 1, 2 and 3 under *Ontario Regulation 364/20 – Rules for Areas in Stage 3* or equivalent legislation. In short, your responsibilities for general compliance and capacity limits under Schedule 1 are as follows:

### **General compliance**

*2. (1) The person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall ensure that the business or organization operates in accordance with all applicable laws, including the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the regulations made under it.*

*(2) The person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall operate the business or organization in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.*

### **Capacity limits for businesses or facilities open to the public**

3. (1) *The person responsible for a place of business or facility that is open to the public shall limit the number of persons in the place of business or facility so that every member of the public is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person in the business or facility, except where Schedule 2 allows persons to be closer together.*

(2) *For greater certainty, subsection (1) does not require persons who are in compliance with public health guidance on households and social circles to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from each other while in a place of business or facility.*

The above instructions, in addition to fundamental public health measures, will:

- encourage and support the use of masks and other COVID-19 prevention measures among the public
- help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission
- serve to keep you, your customers and your business safe
- allow us all to prepare for the increased interactions that will result from Stage 3 re- openings

### **End Date for Instructions and Review**

These Instructions will be reviewed regularly by Huron Perth Public Health. These Instructions will remain in effect until further notice from Huron Perth Public Health; any decision on an end date will depend on whether legislation still calls for adherence to public health advice, recommendations and instructions, and whether there is still evidence of virus transmission.

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. Workplace guidance and resources related to these instructions are available on our website at [hph.ca/workplace](http://hph.ca/workplace). For further information call the HPPH Health Line at 1-888-221-2133 ext. 3267.

Sincerely,



Miriam Klassen, MD, MPH  
Medical Officer of Health and CEO  
Huron Perth Public Health

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<sup>1</sup> Failed Screening: refers to when an individual answers “yes” to questions related to COVID-19 symptoms, travel and/or contact with someone who is a case or is undergoing testing for COVID-19. These persons should not be granted entry into a business or permitted to work (if an employee).

<sup>2</sup> 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. Face shields are not an acceptable form of face covering for the purpose of these instructions because they do

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not provide source protection (*source protection means that the person wearing the mask is less likely to transmit infection to others*). However, they may be used in situations where an individual is unable to use any other type of face covering. In addition, accumulating epidemiological evidence indicates that the widespread use of face coverings by all persons decreases spread of respiratory droplets, and expert opinion supports the widespread use of face coverings to decrease transmission of COVID-19.

<sup>3</sup> Indoor Commercial and Indoor Public Space means those *indoor* portions of any business that are openly accessible to members of the public and that are used for the purposes of offering goods or services to members of the public. The areas of the Indoor Commercial and Indoor Public Spaces that are subject to the face covering requirements of these Instructions are:

- Any areas in which members of the public interact with one another or with staff members, OR
- Any areas that are open or accessible to members of the public

Note that some groups may have existing legislation, guidance or public health instructions guiding their business or organization during Stage 3:

- Day cares, public schools, private schools, post-secondary institutions and other facilities used solely for educational purposes
- School transportation vehicles
- Hospitals and portions of buildings used by regulated health professionals
- Buildings and services owned or operated by the Province of Ontario or the Federal Government of Canada

<sup>4</sup> A Person means any customer, patron, employee or visitor, who enters the business or organization.

<sup>5</sup> Best Efforts when restricting entry to persons not wearing a face covering are defined as follows:

- Where a business has someone restricting occupancy, a verbal reminder that the person should be wearing a face covering as a result of these instructions shall be given to any person entering the business without one. For greater clarity, there is not a need for a business to require proof of a medical exemption or turn away a person to achieve the best effort standard.
- For persons in a business seen removing their face covering for extended periods of time, a verbal reminder to that Person of the requirement to wear face coverings under these instructions.

A business may choose to make face coverings available and offer a face covering to the person, provided that in the event a reusable face covering is given to a customer, that reusable face covering then becomes the property of the customer and cannot be returned for use by any other person. A business may request that a person wear a face covering during their next visit.