

COVID-19 Class Order: *Revised* effective September 8, 2021

What is a class order?

A class order is a legal order that enables Halton Region Public Health to enforce self-isolation requirements for the individuals to whom it applies. These efforts are being made to protect the local community from potential exposure to COVID-19. Self-isolation, and contact tracing to reach those who need to self-isolate, are important public health measures to protect the community from COVID-19 transmission.

Under what authority has this class order been issued?

On May 22, 2020, Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health first issued a class order under Section 22 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. This Act authorizes a class order to be issued to address the risks presented by the potential spread of COVID-19 to people who reside or are present in Halton Region. The class order was first revised effective June 16, 2021 and is now revised again effective September 8, 2021. The revised class order issued and effective September 8 is essentially the same as the May 22 order, with some changes related to self-isolation requirements to reflect new guidance from the Province.

Why did the Medical Officer of Health issue this class order?

The class order was first issued on May 22, 2020, and is now revised effective September 8, 2021, in order to strengthen Halton Region Public Health's ability to reduce the illness and loss of life from COVID-19 and to preserve and protect the capacity of our health care system to respond and provide care for those who need it.

Halton Region and Ontario have experienced outbreaks and community transmission of Variants of Concern (VOCs) of the COVID-19 virus, even in vaccinated individuals. This includes the Delta variant, now present in Halton Region and elsewhere in Ontario, which is understood to be more highly transmissible and presents greater potential for more severe illness than the original COVID-19 virus. It is therefore more important than ever to ensure that all those who need to self-isolate do so, for the protection of all those present or residing in Halton Region.

While the vast majority of people who have or may have COVID-19, as well as those who have had high-risk exposure to COVID-19, have been compliant with instructions from public health authorities to self-isolate, there are individuals who do not take these measures seriously enough or whose life circumstances make it difficult to comply. Halton Region Public Health is available to provide support to those who need assistance. However, this class order is a legal tool to help us ensure that everyone who needs to self-isolate, complies with that direction.

What has changed in the revised class order?

Halton's Class Order requires those with or exposed to COVID-19 to self-isolate to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The September 8 updates to the Class Order reflect recent Provincial directions for case and contact management:

- providing updated guidance for how long people must self-isolate based on their symptoms;
- reducing the length of time people with high-risk exposures must self-isolate from 14 to 10 days; and
- relieving people with high-risk exposures who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 infections of the requirement to self-isolate, at the discretion of Halton Region Public Health.

Generally, “**high-risk exposure**” means that a person has, within the past 14 days, been exposed to a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case and has a high risk of developing COVID-19. For example, you may have:

- lived with them;
- had intimate contact or were sneezed or coughed on by them;
- cared for by them, or provided care to them. For example, helped with bathing, feeding or dressing;
- had face-to-face contact with them:
 - for approximately 15 minutes. These 15 minutes can be all at once or in shorter time periods totaling 15 minutes or more;
 - while fewer than 2 metres (6 feet) apart;
 - regardless whether you or the other person wore a mask; and
 - regardless whether you were indoors or outdoors; and
- been in a crowded and/or closed space with them or where they had been (e.g. a room or a gym), regardless of mask use or physical distance.

These are only some examples of high-risk exposure. Workplace, school and other outbreaks of COVID-19 may also result in high-risk exposures. Halton Region Public Health will assess whether a high-risk exposure is likely following assessment of the situation.

“**Fully vaccinated**” means that you received:

- a full series of a COVID-19 vaccine or any combination of COVID-19 vaccines [approved for use by Health Canada](#); and
- the final dose of your series at least 14 days ago.

If you received one or more vaccines outside of Canada, visit [The Ministry of Health COVID-19 Fully Vaccinated Status in Ontario](#) for the full definition of fully vaccinated.

If you have **previously tested positive** for COVID-19 you may be relieved of the requirement to self-isolate by Halton Region Public Health, if:

- you tested positive for COVID-19 in Canada within the last 90 days; and
- you have completed your isolation period following your positive test result; and
- you are asymptomatic; and
- you are not a resident of a long-term care home, retirement home or congregate living setting, or a patient admitted to a health care setting.

Even if relieved by Halton Region Public Health of the requirement to self-isolate, however:

- you are encouraged to inform your employer of your exposure and follow any restrictions from work as specified by your employer;
- if you develop new symptoms (even mild symptoms) of COVID-19, you must:
 - self-isolate immediately; and
 - report your symptoms to Halton Region Public Health.

Who is required to self-isolate under this class order?

The September 8, 2021 order applies to all persons residing in or present in Halton Region who:

- a) Are a confirmed case or probable case of COVID-19;
- b) Have new symptoms (even mild symptoms) or worsening symptoms of COVID-19, have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the results of their test;
- c) Otherwise have reasonable grounds to believe they now have symptoms (even mild symptoms) of COVID-19, or have had such symptoms within the past 10 days;
- d) Have had a high-risk exposure to a person identified in a) even if they do not themselves have any symptoms of COVID-19;
- e) Have been advised to self-isolate by Halton Region Public Health in circumstances other than

those in a), b), c) or d) above; or

- f) Are a parent, or person with responsibilities of a parent, of a person under sixteen years of age identified in a), b), c), d) or e) who resides or is present in Halton Region.

People in categories a), b), c), d) and e) above must self-isolate and follow other directions in the class order.

If you are a person described in e) above, you must remain in self-isolation for the duration specified by Halton Region Public Health.

The purpose of category f) is to require parents and others who have the responsibilities of a parent to ensure compliance with the class order by any person under 16 years of age. Parents and others must self-isolate only if they themselves also fall within category a), b), c), d) or e). Further details on the symptoms of COVID-19 and the definitions for “confirmed case”, “probable case” and “high-risk exposure” are included in the class order.

When is the class order effective? How long must people self-isolate?

The revised class order is effective from September 8, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. and will remain in effect until such time as the Medical Officer of Health determines it should be revised again or is no longer required.

The class order explains how long people must self-isolate, depending on their circumstances. The class order also explains that public health staff may sometimes direct an individual to extend the period of isolation, depending upon symptoms and test results.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, modifications to the class order can be made by Halton Region Public Health for the following people:

- a person who, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, provides an essential service, for the limited purpose of providing that essential service;
- a person receiving essential medical services or treatments, whether related to COVID-19 or not; or
- where a person’s isolation, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, would not be in the public interest.

In keeping with recent Provincial direction, the September 8th updates to the Class Order also explain that people with high-risk exposures who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 infections may be relieved of the requirement to self-isolate at the discretion of Halton Region Public Health.

Even if relieved by Halton Region Public Health of the requirement to self-isolate, however:

- you are encouraged to inform your employer of their exposure and follow any restrictions from work as specified by your employer; and
- if you develop new symptoms (even mild symptoms) of COVID-19, you must:
 - self-isolate immediately; and
 - report your symptoms to Halton Region Public Health.

Please contact Halton Region Public Health at accesshalton@halton.ca or 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866 for more information.

What does it mean to self-isolate under the class order?

Individuals who are affected by the class order are required to stay at home and not to have visitors, except as essential (for example, where a health care worker is visiting the home). The other things you must do while self-isolating are explained in the class order and the Public Health Ontario fact sheet, *How to Self-Isolate*, that forms part of that order.

While self-isolating, people must remain reachable for monitoring by public health. This helps Halton Region Public Health make sure they are doing what is necessary and to identify if they need support while self-isolating.

If a person with COVID-19 is homeless or their home is otherwise unsuitable or unsafe for isolation

purposes, assistance with accommodations can be provided.

People in self-isolation should arrange to have groceries and other necessities delivered to them. If you need assistance, please see our list of resources at [halton.ca/COVID19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID19).

Why do I have to provide contact names and other information to public health? How is my privacy protected?

People required to self-isolate **must**, if asked, share with public health staff the names and contact information for all people with whom they had contact while likely infectious and any other information that may be requested. Providing this information is crucial. It enables Halton Region Public Health to act to prevent disease transmission to others. Our shared ability to keep schools, businesses and other important community activities open in Halton Region and across Ontario depends on the ability of public health staff to do this important work.

Halton Region Public Health understands that people will have concerns about their privacy. All information collected is protected by Ontario's privacy legislation for health information, the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*.

I am required to self-isolate but need support to do so. Who should I contact?

Halton Region Public Health is available to assist residents who need help in order to properly self-isolate or while self-isolating. Individuals who need support can contact Halton Region Public Health by email at accesshalton@halton or by calling 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866.

What should I do if my illness gets worse while I am self-isolating?

Seek **immediate** medical attention if your illness is worsening (for example, you have difficulty breathing) by calling **9-1-1**. Tell them of your COVID-19 diagnosis or symptom(s) and answer all screening questions accurately (including symptoms and travel history) so that you will receive appropriate care and the right infection prevention and control precautions are taken.

How could the class order be enforced if a person fails to self-isolate?

As is our general practice with these kinds of orders, Halton Region Public Health will attempt to engage directly with a person failing to self-isolate (or to take other important steps) to make sure that they understand what is required of them and to see if they need support in an effort to gain voluntary compliance. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the MOH will consider the need for legal action to compel compliance.

Individuals who are required to self-isolate by this class order but fail to do so can be charged and fined up to \$5,000 per day. The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* also allows the MOH to go to court and seek an order to protect the health of the community, e.g., by taking the person into custody to be confined in a hospital or other appropriate facility until the self-isolation period is over or requiring compliance with other public health directions.

For more information, contact Halton Region Public Health by email at accesshalton@halton.ca or call 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866.

Can a person challenge the class order?

Any person subject to the class order may request a hearing by the Health Services Appeal and Review Board to challenge its requirements. Refer to the class order for details.

How does the Medical Officer of Health's class order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* differ from the federal order under the *Quarantine Act*?

The federal government's quarantine order is aimed at all travellers entering Canada, effective March 25, 2020. That order also imposes a 14-day home quarantine (self-isolation) on travellers regardless whether they have symptoms of COVID-19. See the Government of Canada's [instructions for travellers from](#)

[outside Canada](#) for more information.

In some cases, individuals subject to home quarantine or isolation measures under the federal quarantine order may also be subject to the class order issued by Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health, e.g., individuals who are diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also recently returned from travel.

More information:

If you have questions about the class order, please contact Halton Region Public Health:

- by phone: 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866; or
- by email: accesshalton@halton.ca.

Residents who have COVID-19 symptoms are encouraged to seek testing at an assessment centre:

If you are a resident of Oakville, Milton or Halton Hills:

- Book an appointment at a [Halton Healthcare Assessment & Testing Centre](#)
 - by phone: 905-203-7963
 - online: [Online booking](#)

If you are a resident of Burlington:

- book an appointment at [Joseph Brant Hospital COVID-19 Assessment Centre](#)
- by phone: 905-632-3737, extension 6550
- online: [Online booking](#)

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