



## INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

**DATE:** October 19, 2021

**EFFECTIVE:** November 26, 2021 at 12:01 a.m.

**TO:** **All persons responsible for businesses and organizations that are open with indoor areas of facilities used for Organized Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities<sup>1</sup> in Halton Region, including facility operators and permit holders**

Current data from Ontario, across Canada and in other countries around the world make it clear that vaccination against COVID-19 for all those eligible is a crucial strategy for reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in Halton Region, reducing the impact of the fourth wave (including within our health care system) and preventing the need for stronger public health measures including business closures.

I recognize the importance of sports and recreational activities to physical and mental health for children of all ages. Organized Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities nonetheless bring with them specific risks, including high exertion and close contact (between participants and/or participants and coaches and others involved in such activities) that can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Halton Region has experienced sports-related outbreaks, and recent outbreaks across the province demonstrate that this potential remains of significant public health concern. Those affected can include participants, coaches, officials, spectators and beyond, including throughout the province where these activities involve participants, teams, coaches, officials, spectators and others from outside Halton Region.

**Effective November 26, 2021 at 12:01 a.m., I therefore instruct all persons responsible for businesses and organizations that are open with indoor areas of facilities used for Organized Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities in Halton Region, including facility operators and permit holders, to establish, implement and ensure compliance with a policy to require that each person 12 years and older who attends an indoor area of the facility for the purpose of:**

- a. actively participating in one or more Organized Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities; or**
- b. coaching, training, instructing, officiating or having similar involvement in Organized Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities,**

**provides, at the point of entry, identification and proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or a valid medical exemption each time they enter.**

For guidance regarding what constitutes identification, proof of being fully vaccinated and a valid medical exemption, see the Ministry of Health's [Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations under the Reopening Ontario Act](#).

**These instructions remain in effect until amended or rescinded by me.**

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS CLOSELY**

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<sup>1</sup> These include, but are not limited to, extracurricular sports and recreational fitness activities, sports leagues, organized pick-up sports, dance classes, gymnastics, martial arts, swimming classes or as otherwise described in the Ministry of Health's [Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations under the Reopening Ontario Act](#), but do not include the sports leagues and associations identified in Table 1 and Table 2 under subsection 4(4), Schedule 1 of O. Reg. 364/20 issued under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#); included are all related training, practices, games and competitions.

These policies will help to protect the health of all participants, coaches, officials, volunteers, spectators and others – including, importantly, people with weaker immune systems or who cannot be vaccinated because of their age or for medical reasons. These policies will benefit all participants in these activities by helping to prevent interruptions and disruptions caused by outbreaks.

Robust compliance with masking, physical distancing and other public health measures in all facilities used for sports and recreational fitness activities in Halton Region also remains essential to protect our community, and I ask for your continued support and cooperation in that regard.

Ontario's *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (ROA) and *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) require all persons responsible for a business or organization that is open to operate in compliance with the instructions of public health officials. That includes these instructions issued by me, rendered mandatory by sections 2(2) and (2.1), Schedules 1 and 4 of O.Reg. 364/20 as amended, issued under the ROA. The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has been consulted before issuing these instructions.

These instructions will be enforced by public health officials and by provincial offences officers under one or more of the ROA (sections 9, 9.1, 10 and 10.1), EMCPA (sections 7.0.5 and 7.0.11) and/or the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (sections 100, 101 and 102). Failure to comply is an offence. Among the enforcement actions that may be taken, you may be charged and penalties imposed including significant fines, imprisonment and/or closure of premises.

While I cannot provide you with an “end-date” for these instructions, I assure you that I will monitor local, provincial and national developments relevant to the spread of COVID-19 in Halton, as I have to date, and adjust our course accordingly. I may amend these instructions (if and as required) and will rescind them as soon I determine they are no longer necessary.

For more information, please visit [halton.ca/COVID19](https://halton.ca/COVID19) or call 311.



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This letter shall be posted at: [halton.ca/COVID19](https://halton.ca/COVID19)