



INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

DATE: Friday, May 7, 2021

Effective: Saturday, May 8, 2021 at 12:01 a.m.

TO: All persons responsible for a business or organization (**workplace**) in Halton Region, where workers (including employees, those hired under third party agencies, contractors, vendors, volunteers or students and any other such persons) are present at the workplace or the public are regularly present, with the exception of:

- A licensed child care program that is in compliance with guidance issued by the Ministry of Education;
- 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, other than the portion of premises used for the sale of goods that are neither medication nor health related supplies in pharmacies;
- Schools and school boards licensed under the *Education Act*; and
- 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.

First of all, thank you for your efforts over the past year and longer to comply with public health requirements. These aim to protect your staff, patrons and our community. I ask for your continued support and compliance with the instructions set out below.

Halton Region and Ontario have now experienced outbreaks and community transmission of Variants of Concern (**VOCs**) of the COVID-19 virus.

With VOCs of COVID-19 circulating in the community, it is prudent to take a conservative approach to cases involving workplace and community exposures. The new VOCs are more contagious and therefore there could be more asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 virus happening as a result. Following public health measures is the best way to protect ourselves against the spread of COVID-19, including variants of concern. The goal of outbreak management is to identify the source of illness, control the outbreak and limit transmission to others.

Ontario's strengthened shutdown measures continue to require persons responsible for a business or organization that is open to operate the business or organization in compliance with the instructions of public health officials. That includes these instructions issued by me.

These instructions will be enforced by public health officials and by provincial offences officers under one or more of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* and/or the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. Failure to comply is an offence. Among enforcement actions that may be taken, you may be charged and penalties imposed including fines, imprisonment and/or closure of premises.

Please see our website for further information: www.halton.ca.

See Ontario's shutdown measures at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/emergency-information>.

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

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS CLOSELY

A. ACTIONS YOU MUST TAKE IF AWARE THAT A WORKER AT YOUR WORKPLACE HAS COVID-19

1. Immediately send home the worker with COVID-19 if they are at work

- 1) Immediately send home the worker with COVID-19 if they are at work and support them to stay off work while they are self-isolating.
- 2) Clean and disinfect any surfaces the worker may have touched.
- 3) If the worker is already at home, direct them not to enter the workplace. The worker will be contacted by public health and will be advised when it is safe for them to return to work.

2. Inform the worker with COVID-19 that they are required to self-isolate at home

- 1) Inform the worker with COVID-19 that they are required to self-isolate at home for 10 days from symptom onset.
- 2) If the worker has no symptoms, they are required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date they were tested.
- 3) Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health has issued a class order under Section 22 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. Inform the worker they must read [Halton Region's class order](#) to understand its requirements. Similar class orders may be in effect in other municipalities.

3. Identify and notify people who were in contact with the worker with COVID-19 during the time they could have spread their infection to others

- 1) Identify all people who had contact with the worker with COVID-19 during their infectious period. This period begins 48 hours prior to the worker with COVID-19 developing symptoms (or 48 hours before they were tested if no symptoms).
- 2) Use the attached Table (**Attachment #1**) to determine the level of risk of each person who had contact with the worker with COVID-19 and what actions need to be taken based on their level of risk. People with "high-risk" exposures are "Close Contacts". If you have any questions, please call 311.
- 3) Provide the attached "**Letter to Close Contacts**" (**Attachment #2**) to **all identified Close Contacts**.

When notifying contacts, you **must maintain confidentiality** and not identify the name or personal health information of the worker with COVID-19. This means **not disclosing** information that identifies the worker or it is reasonably foreseeable could be used, alone or with other information, to identify the worker.

- 4) If **more than 14 days** have passed since the most recent date of exposure identified in 1) above, provide the attached "**Letter to Close Contacts Past 14 Days of Exposure**" (**Attachment #3**), i.e., **instead of Attachment #2**, to all identified Close Contacts.

- 5) Email PublicHealthExposures@halton.ca a list of all identified Close Contacts who are sent Attachment #2 for additional follow-up. Provide the following information for each person identified as a Close Contact:

Name (first and last name)	Date of Birth (YYYY- MM-DD)	Address (Town or City at a minimum)	Phone number	Email or alternate phone number

B. ACTIONS YOU MUST TAKE IF AWARE THAT YOUR WORKPLACE HAS OR HAS HAD TWO OR MORE WORKERS WITH COVID-19 WITHIN THE PAST 14 DAYS

- 1) Follow the steps in A above, for each worker with COVID-19.
- 2) Immediately notify **Halton Region Public Health**, by calling 905-825-6057, ext. 1 from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. seven days a week.

Provide contact details of the most responsible decision-maker at the workplace premises and ensure that this person is readily available for contact by Halton Region Public Health.

- 3) **Comply with any further direction from Halton Region Public Health.** This includes cooperating with Halton Region Public Health staff including allowing entry into the workplace premises for inspection and to support enhanced infection prevention and control and other public health measures and recommendations.
- 4) Notify the Ontario [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#) in writing **within four days** if a worker has tested positive for COVID-19 due to an exposure at your workplace or if a claim has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).
- 5) Advise your workplace’s joint health and safety committee, health and safety representative, and, if applicable, the worker’s trade union.
- 6) Should a workplace reach a threshold of greater than 5% of its on-site workforce affected by an ongoing COVID-19 outbreak then Halton Region Public Health may direct implementation of additional measures up to and including partial or full closure of the workplace. If so, again, your immediate action to assist and/or implement one or more such measures will be required.
- 7) Workers of a closed workplace are considered Close Contacts who must self-isolate and shall not work in another workplace during their period of isolation.

Halton Region Public Health (or other public health staff as appropriate) monitors people with COVID-19 and Close Contacts and will advise workers when it is safe for them to return to work.

C. PROTECT ALL YOUR WORKERS FROM COVID-19

- 1) You must continue to implement all COVID-19 prevention measures for your sector outlined in [provincial guidelines](#) and [Halton Region Public Health guidance](#), including but not limited to screening, physical distancing, wearing of masks and eye protection, hand hygiene, infection prevention and control and a safety plan.

- 2) Further to 1), implement workplace policies to address the following:
- Symptomatic workers should get tested as soon as possible from the date of onset of symptoms.
 - Workers who test positive for COVID-19 shall notify their employer immediately.
 - Asymptomatic workers are encouraged to seek testing.
- 3) Comply with all directives and guidance including those from:
- Halton Region Public Health
 - [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines: Organizations and Businesses](#)
 - Ministry of Health
 - [Sector-specific guidelines](#)
 - Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
 - [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)

For more information, please visit halton.ca/covid19 or call 311.



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These instructions shall be posted at: halton.ca/COVID19

Attachment #1 - Table to Determine “High-Risk” and “Low-Risk” Exposures

Please note: Risk assessments may require consideration of various factors in this chart. Each exposure is unique and may require further examination by Halton Region Public Health. Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated individuals may NOT be required to self-isolate. Please refer to Class Order for further direction

Exposure type	High-risk Exposure (“Close contact”)	Low-risk Exposure
Description	<p>Contact with a case within 2 meters for a cumulative duration of at least 15 minutes in 24 hour period, regardless of whether case and/or contact is masked</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Case did NOT wear a mask and Contact was not wearing appropriate PPE for any duration of exposure while within 2 metres of each other, except for a transient exposure. Appropriate PPE includes surgical/procedure mask and eye protection*.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Had direct close physical contact (e.g. hugging, kissing).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Contact with bodily fluids of the case (e.g. coughed on or sneezed on).</p>	<p>Contact did wear appropriate PPE including surgical/procedure mask and eye protection for the duration of exposure.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Maintained a physical distance greater than two metres (six feet) at all times during interaction**.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Transient interactions (e.g. walking by the case or briefly in the same room, grocery clerk passes bag and hands touch).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Separated by appropriate barrier (e.g. Plexiglas) when maintaining a distances less than two metres (six feet) with appropriate air ventilation.</p>
Required actions for contact	<p><u>Self-isolate</u> for 14 days from last exposure date</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Get tested for COVID-19. See testing and results to know how soon a contact should get tested.</p> <p>Note: Even if the test result is negative, the contact must continue to self-isolate for the full 14 days from last exposure date.</p>	<p><u>Self-monitor</u> for symptoms for 14 days from last exposure date.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>If COVID-19 symptoms develop, <u>self-isolate</u> and get tested immediately, even if symptoms are mild.</p>
<p>Note: Non-medical masks (e.g. cloth masks) are NOT considered PPE and do not provide appropriate protection.</p> <p>*Eye protection can include goggles, face shields or safety glasses</p> <p>** Physical distancing of two metres (six feet) does not eliminate the risk of transmission, particularly in confined indoor and poorly ventilated spaces and during exercise, talking loudly, yelling or singing activities</p>		

Attachment #2 – Letter to Close Contacts

Re: COVID-19 High-risk Exposure at

This letter is to inform you that you had a high-risk exposure to a person with COVID-19 at _____ and are therefore considered a Close Contact and required **to self-isolate for 14 days from your last exposure date**. Your contact information has been provided to Halton Region Public Health for further Case and Contact management as appropriate.

Date(s) of Exposure:

This means that for the next 14 days, following the last exposure date:

- You should stay in a separate room from other people in your home, including while eating food.
- Use your own washroom where possible.
- You should stay two meters (six feet) away from other people in your home. Wear a mask when in the same room as others.
- You should wash your hands and clean surfaces you touch often (lights, knobs, taps, etc.).
- Your household members should also stay home except for essential reasons (work, school/child care, essential groceries/pharmacy) while you are self-isolating.
- Additional direction on self-isolation is available on our website and can be accessed [here](#).

Testing for COVID-19:

If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), get tested immediately. If you do not develop symptoms, get tested on or after day 7 of isolation. Continue the self-isolation for 14 days even if you receive a negative test result.

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms after a negative test, get re-tested.

If you test positive and live in Halton Region, you may receive a text message from Halton Region Public Health with a secure link to a “Virtual Assistant”. If you receive these text messages, please immediately complete the form in the secure link provided (the URL will contain covid.ontario.ca). This will help identify your own Close Contacts (i.e., people who have had high-risk exposures to you) in a timely manner. The Virtual Assistant is one more tool to help us stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community. The Virtual Assistant is one more tool to help us stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community. If you test positive and live outside of Halton Region you will be contacted by your local public health unit.

End of self-isolation period:

The projected last date for the self-isolation period is _____

You may come out of isolation on or after _____ as long as you are symptom free.

Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health has issued a Class Order under Section 22 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. This is a legal order to enforce self-isolation requirements. **Individuals identified as Close Contacts residing in Halton must self-isolate as required by this legally binding order**. To learn more, please read the [Class Order](#) and [Class Order Fact Sheet](#).

For more information, visit halton.ca/COVID19 or call 311.

Sincerely,

Halton Region Public Health

Attachment #3 – Letter to Close Contacts Past 14 Days of Exposure**Re: COVID-19 High-risk Exposure at**

This letter is to inform you that you have been identified as having had a high-risk exposure to a person that has tested positive for COVID-19. **Your exposure was over 14 days ago and therefore, although you were a Close Contact, you are not required to self-isolate at this time. However, you are encouraged to seek testing for COVID-19 immediately.**

Date(s) of Exposure:

COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness similar to a cold or flu that can cause:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Muscles aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose □ Diarrhea

Illness can range from mild to severe and some individuals may develop complications such as pneumonia, kidney failure or worse.

If you have experienced any of these symptoms since exposure, isolate immediately and seek testing for COVID-19.

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

Sincerely,

Halton Region Public Health