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Issued: December 10, 2020

TO: All persons responsible for a business or organization in Waterloo Region permitted to be open under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and Related Regulations, Effective: 12:01 AM on Monday, December 14, 2020

RE: Instructions on COVID-19 screening measures, safety plans, physical distancing & face coverings or PPE, and ventilation & HVAC systems

I want to acknowledge and thank you for all of your efforts being made to protect the health and safety of workers and customers. I recognize it is a challenging time for businesses and organizations which are having to quickly adapt to new requirements and implement new measures. Thank-you for your diligence, your collaboration and your commitment to our community.

Given the increased spread of COVID-19 infections in Waterloo Region, including the number of outbreaks in workplace and business settings, and common areas of weakness identified in recent inspections in our region led by the Provincial Ministry of Labour, there is a need for strengthened measures to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in workplace and business settings.

Key factors contributing to transmission identified during investigations of workplace outbreaks include employees either not adhering to, or not being enabled to adhere to, public health precautions such as distancing and the wearing of face coverings, and working while symptomatic.

Accordingly, I am issuing these Instructions to all persons responsible for a business or organization in Waterloo Region, to reinforce the requirements of the provincial health and safety legislation and the public health preventive measures for workplaces.

These Instructions are being provided pursuant to Section 2(2) of Schedule 1 to Ontario Regulation 263/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 2 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) schools and school boards licensed under the *Education Act*; and,
- (iv) 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.

A. SCREENING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ensure workplace active screening is conducted daily for all workers and essential visitors attending the workplace.
 - a. Screening should occur before or when a worker or essential visitor enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift.
 - b. Workers or essential visitors who do not pass screening should be immediately excluded from the workplace and encouraged to self-isolate and seek assessment and testing.
 - c. Screening questions can be asked and answered in-person or remotely, and screening results must be reviewed by the workplace before workers and essential visitors enter the workplace.
 - d. Screening is not required for attendances by emergency personnel, inspectors, or enforcement officers.
2. The screening questions to be asked of workers and essential visitors to determine if they can be permitted entry to the workplace must be as found in the [Ontario Ministry of Health COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces \(Businesses and Organizations\) \(Version 1 – September 25, 2020\)](#) or be substantially similar in content.

3. If screening is to occur in-person:
 - a. Limit points of entry into the workplace setting to help facilitate screening. Points of egress need to be maintained in case of fire or emergency.
 - b. Space and layout the entrance so that physical distancing of two (2) metres can be maintained during screenings.
 - c. If physical distancing of two (2) metres cannot be maintained, place an appropriate physical barrier (e.g. Plexiglas) at the entrance to separate the screener from workers who are needing to be screened and provide appropriate personal protective equipment for the screener, including medical masks and eye protection.
 - d. Encourage all workers to use alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer before entering the workplace.

B. SAFETY PLAN INSTRUCTIONS:

1. If not already appointed, appoint a management individual to be responsible for:
 - a. the preparation and implementation of a COVID-19 safety plan (as described below);
 - b. monitoring compliance with that COVID-19 safety plan; and
 - c. the implementation and compliance with all required and recommended occupational health & safety and infection prevention & control measures.

The provincial template for a safety plan can be found here:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/develop-your-covid-19-workplace-safety-plan>

2. The COVID-19 safety plan referred to in the preceding paragraph must:
 - a. describe the measures and procedures which have been implemented or will be implemented in the business or in the workplace to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19, including by screening, physical distancing, masks or face coverings, cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects, proper ventilation, and the wearing of personal protective equipment;
 - b. be in writing and made available to any person for review on request; and
 - c. be prepared, implemented and made available no later than five (5) days after the requirement first applies, which means by December 21, 2020 for businesses and organizations.

3. Once prepared, a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan must be posted in a conspicuous place in the retail business or in the workplace where it is most likely to come to the attention of individuals attending or working in the location.

C. PHYSICAL DISTANCING, FACE COVERINGS/PPE, AND DRIVING ASSOCIATED WITH WORK:

1. Ensure that physical distancing of workers takes place by at least two (2) metres throughout the workplace, and during eating and rest periods (i.e., lunchrooms, change rooms).
2. Physical barriers¹ (such as plexiglas) should be used in environments where physical distancing cannot be guaranteed. Physical distancing is always preferable to the use of barriers where reasonably possible.
3. For the indoor area of the premises, which is accessible to members of the public, ensure each worker wears a face covering and maintains a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while in the indoor area.
4. For the indoor area of the premises, which is not accessible to members of the public, ensure each worker wears a face covering, unless they are always able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other worker. Even with the use of a face covering, if two metres distance cannot always be maintained, then workers may be considered close contacts requiring 14 days of self-isolation, upon public health investigation of a co-worker diagnosed with COVID-19.
5. If a worker, in the course of providing a service indoors, is required to come within two metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering and there is no separation (by physical barrier) between the worker and the other person, ensure the worker wears appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). At a minimum, this would include a medical mask and eye protection. A face shield is not a replacement for a medical mask.
6. Minimize instances of more than one individual per vehicle for driving associated with work, and when unavoidable, ensure face coverings (preferably medical masks) are supplied to and used by each individual, ensure distancing as much as physically possible, and increase ventilation to the outdoors (i.e. through a partially open window) in vehicles, when possible.

D. VENTILATION AND HEATING, VENTILATION, AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) SYSTEMS

¹ 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](#)

1. Optimize indoor air ventilation, through measures such as increasing ventilation with outdoor air where possible, avoiding recirculation of air as far as practically possible, ensuring clean filters, controlling humidity, and optimizing air change rates.
2. Consult with a HVAC contractor or knowledgeable maintenance staff regarding how to properly optimize ventilation in the facility.
3. Have the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems assessed on a regular basis, and ensure they are meeting the expected standard for the facility.

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ensure that accurate and updated contact information for all workers (and clients if prescribed in O. Reg. 263/20) is available to be produced to Region of Waterloo Public Health within 24 hours of request, in support of case management and contact tracing requirements for COVID-19.
2. In addition to legislated requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990*, ensure any further instructions, directions and guidance provided by Region of Waterloo Public Health, the Government of Ontario and/or the Government of Canada pertaining to COVID-19 are followed.
 - a. This may include ensuring adherence to isolation orders issued to employees, ensuring the required public health measures such as active screening and physical distancing are always maintained within a workplace, and supporting all aspects of investigations and outbreak management related to communicable diseases, including COVID-19, conducted by Region of Waterloo Public Health.

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.

“essential visitor” means any individual providing a service in the establishment who is not an employee or patron of the establishment (e.g., delivery, maintenance, contract workers).

“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.

Ontario Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace>

ENFORCEMENT

While a balanced approach between education and enforcement is always sought, the *Reopening Ontario Act* provides that individuals who do not comply with the requirements of a continued section 7.0.2 order, such as Ontario Regulation 263/20, are guilty of an offence and may be liable to a fine of \$750 up to a maximum of \$100,000, while corporations may be liable to a fine of up to \$10,000,000, for each day or part of each day on which the offence occurs or continues.

Enforcement of these Instructions may be conducted by police officers as well as by provincial offences officers (which includes municipal by-law officers and public health enforcement personnel).

These Instructions shall be posted on the Region of Waterloo public website:

regionofwaterloo.ca/ph

SIGNED THIS 10th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2020



Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, MD, FRCPC
Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health
Region of Waterloo Public Health & Emergency Services