

July 13, 2020

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

**Re: Huron Perth Public Health Instructions to Persons Responsible for a Business or Organization Permitted to be open under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, R.S.O. 1990 (“EMCPA”) and related Regulations, or otherwise.**

This letter outlines public health expectations for businesses and organizations that are permitted to be open per EMCPA O. Reg 263/20 – Stage 2 Closures or other such legislation, or that are otherwise open. The purpose of this letter is to highlight your responsibilities. Huron Perth Public Health is committed to supporting businesses to be successful and will provide supplementary advice and resources as possible.

As the Medical Officer of Health, the following are my Instructions, pursuant to O. Reg 263/20 s.4(2) (or any other legislation such as the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act*, 2020), 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 should require that:

1. Employees who are ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should stay home and seek medical advice.
2. Employees who have travelled out of the country or have been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 should stay home and follow public health direction.
3. Screening practices for employees be implemented. Screening is best completed prior to commencing work.
4. Excellent hygiene practices including hand hygiene, and cough and sneeze etiquette are promoted.
5. Effective measures are in place to maintain 2 metre physical distancing amongst all employees and customer, to the fullest extent possible.
6. Ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that all individuals wear a mask (for example, a homemade cloth mask or face covering) where a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (or when employees work in the public space of the business without a suitable barrier), unless the nature of the work requires the use of a medical mask.

Further, the following are my additional Instructions to owners or operators of all Indoor Commercial and Indoor Public Spaces <sup>i</sup> and to all public transit services in the Huron Perth Public Health service area, effective 12:01 a.m. July 17, 2020:

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

1. Screening practices for all Persons<sup>ii</sup> are implemented including, at minimum, posting clear signage about not entering the premises 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 premises if a sink is not available.
3. Best efforts<sup>iii</sup> 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<sup>iv</sup> and that the face covering is worn inside the premises at all times, unless it is reasonably required to temporarily remove the face covering for services provided by the establishment. 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 this you should:

- a. Have a policy in place to request all Persons entering the premises of the Indoor Commercial and/or Indoor Public Space or remaining in the premises to wear a face covering.
- b. Enact and enforce the policy in “good faith” and use it as a means to educate people on face covering use 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 premises.
- e. Ensure that employees also wear masks if their job requires them to enter the public space of the business unless protected by plexiglass or other barrier.
- f. Ensure that all employees are aware of the policy and are trained on your establishment’s expectations.

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 in 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.

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

Please be reminded of your responsibilities for general compliance per provincial legislation per EMCPA Ontario Regulation 263/20 – Stage 2 Closures or equivalent legislation such as the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020:

(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.

(3) The person responsible for a business that is open to the public, or an organization responsible for a facility that is open to the public, shall ensure that the place of business or facility is operated to enable members of the public in the place of business or facility to, to the fullest extent possible, maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from other persons. (Ontario Regulation 263/20)

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.

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

- encourage and support the use of masks 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

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

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.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

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

## **Definitions**

<sup>i</sup> Indoor Commercial and Indoor Public Space means those *indoor* portions of any premises 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 Establishment 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

Face coverings are required in these premises:

- Arcades and other indoor amusement facilities
- Buses, bus shelters,
- Hotels and motels, with the exception of rented rooms
- Indoor areas of restaurants and bars, with the exception of patrons consuming food/drink
- Indoor areas of fitness centres, gyms and recreational and sports facilities
- Indoor concert venues, theatres and cinemas
- Laundromats
- Lobby areas of commercial buildings
- Municipal buildings
- Museums, galleries, historic sites, etc.
- Personal Service Settings
- Places of worship
- Professional services such as counselling, personal care, funeral homes, repair and rental services
- Stores and shopping malls
- Taxis, limousines, ride-share vehicles

*Exemptions (Note that some groups may have existing legislation guiding their premises)*

- Day cares, 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
- Portions of community centres, arenas or other buildings that are being used for the purpose of providing day camps for children or for the training of amateur or professional athletes
- Portions of community centres, arenas or other buildings owned or operated by the Municipality used for the purposes of providing community services or programs for which registration or prebooking for a group is required.

<sup>ii</sup> A Person means any customer, patron, employee or visitor, who enters the premises.

<sup>iii</sup> Best Efforts when restricting entry to Persons wearing Face coverings are defined as follows:

- Where an establishment has someone restricting occupancy into the premises, 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 premises 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 premises 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.
- An Establishment 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.
- An Establishment may request that a person wear a face covering during their next visit.

<sup>iv</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 the community transmission. Face shields are not acceptable forms of a face covering for the purpose of these instructions because they do 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.