

September 1, 2021

To persons responsible for a business or organization in the municipalities of the County of Simcoe, the District of Muskoka, and the Cities of Orillia and Barrie:

**Re: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Instructions to persons responsible for a business or organization, in the County of Simcoe, the District of Muskoka, and the Cities of Orillia and Barrie, that are permitted to open under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c.17, as amended, and associated Regulations, as amended as well as any other emergency order and/or public health statute including the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9 that is in force. If your business or organization is subject to a Section 22 Order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7 you must adhere to both the requirements of the Order and to this letter of instruction.**

**This letter of instruction replaces all prior letters of instruction issued by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to businesses and organizations within Simcoe and Muskoka and may be amended or rescinded without notice.**

The following businesses or organizations are currently exempt from the instructions issued below due to sector specific legislation, directives and/or guidelines currently governing these workplaces COVID-19 measures:

- Health care providers and health care entities as defined in Section 77.7 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990*, who are subject to the Chief Medical Officer of Health's Directives issued thereunder;
- Schools and school boards licensed under the *Education Act, 1990*;
- 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;
- Childcare settings licensed under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*; and
- Recreational and Day or overnight camps for children.

**Instructions for Additional Public Health Measures in the County of Simcoe, the District of Muskoka and Cities of Orillia and Barrie.**

Given the circulation of COVID-19 variants within Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), we are facing a critical time in our combined efforts against this disease. Variants of COVID-19 are more contagious which means it will take more intensive efforts of the same public health practices to prevent transmitting infection to one another. SMDHU recognizes and promotes the COVID-19 vaccination as a means to reduce illness and transmission of the virus, however the following instruction applies to all persons responsible for a business or organization within the municipalities in the County of Simcoe, the District of Muskoka, and the Cities of Orillia and Barrie, both vaccinated and non-vaccinated.

One key factor contributing to transmission in businesses and workplaces is close contact between individuals, which then spreads the disease easily to individuals within households, particularly if individuals are not fully vaccinated. SMDHU continues to see workplace and public setting transmission, often resulting in outbreaks. This is due, in part, to a failure of some workplaces and businesses to meet the requirements of the provincial health and safety legislation and the public health preventive measures for the workplace.

As a result, I am reissuing the following enhanced instructions to the businesses and organizations within the municipalities serviced by SMDHU requiring them to take additional measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 as provided below. These instructions are to be implemented by every business and organization within SMDHU, unless

<b>□ Barrie:</b> 15 Sperling Drive Barrie, ON L4M 6K9 705-721-7520 FAX: 705-721-1495	<b>□ Collingwood:</b> 280 Pretty River Pkwy. Collingwood, ON L9Y 4J5 705-445-0804 FAX: 705-445-6498	<b>□ Cookstown:</b> 2-25 King Street S. Cookstown, ON L0L 1L0 705-458-1103 FAX: 705-458-0105	<b>□ Gravenhurst:</b> 2-5 Pineridge Gate Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1Z3 705-684-9090 FAX: 705-684-9887	<b>□ Huntsville:</b> 34 Chaffey St. Huntsville, ON P1H 1K1 705-789-8813 FAX: 705-789-7245	<b>□ Midland:</b> A-925 Hugel Ave. Midland, ON L4R 1X8 705-526-9324 FAX: 705-526-1513	<b>□ Orillia:</b> 120-169 Front St. S. Orillia, ON L3V 4S8 705-325-9565 FAX: 705-325-2091
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specifically exempt by these instructions, in addition to any COVID-19 regulatory requirements, local bylaw or health unit Order that are in force or effect.

### Instructions to persons responsible for businesses and organizations:

Effective **September 6, 2021 at 12:01 a.m.**, I am instructing all persons responsible for a business or organization in the County of Simcoe, District of Muskoka, City of Barrie, and the City of Orillia to implement the following measures:

1. Prepare and make available a COVID-19 safety plan for the business or organization which shall describe how the requirements of the *Reopening Ontario Act* and the regulations made under it have been or will be implemented in the business to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19 including by screening, physical distancing, masks or face coverings, cleaning or disinfecting of surfaces and objects, and the wearing of personal protective equipment.
2. Enable **remote work** for workers, where reasonably possible, to reduce the number of workers exposed to the workplace. Further, whenever feasible it is recommended that the business or organization may implement remote operations by providing goods by mail or other forms of delivery, by making goods available for pick-up and providing services online, by telephone or other remote means.
3. Regardless of the worker's vaccination status, the person responsible for the business or organization must ensure workplace [active screening](#)<sup>1</sup> is conducted daily for all workers attending the workplace. Screening of workers is to occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift. Workers with COVID-19 symptoms, or who have been identified as a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19, are to be immediately excluded from work and encouraged to self-isolate and seek assessment and testing. Workers who fail active screening (by answering any question 'yes' in the provincial screening tool) must be restricted from entering the premises of the business or organization. Active screening shall take place either remotely or if completed onsite, shall take place in a manner where physical distancing and face coverings are used by both the screener and the person being screened.
4. The person responsible for the business or organization must actively screen members of the public as identified in O. Reg. 364/20 under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*. Active screening of members of the public shall occur in accordance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health in restaurants, bars, food or drink establishments with dance facilities, meeting or event spaces, conference centres, convention centres, personal care services, personal physical fitness trainers, businesses which permit members of the public to test drive any vehicles, boats or watercraft, businesses that provide teaching and instruction including driving instruction, facilities used for indoor or outdoor sports and recreational fitness activities, facilities used for indoor or outdoor sports and recreational fitness activities, casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments, tour and guide services including boat tours, photography studio and services, strip clubs, bathhouses and sex clubs.
5. For businesses and organizations that are identified in O. Reg. 364/20 under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, the person responsible for the business or organization must record the

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<sup>1</sup> Screening questions can be asked in-person or can be answered remotely and reviewed by the workplace before workers arrive onsite.

If screening is to occur in-person:

- Limit points of entry into the setting to help facilitate screening.
- Space and layout the entrance so that physical distancing can be maintained during screenings.
- Encourage all staff to use Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR)/hand sanitizer with 60-90% alcohol content before entering.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained during screening the following is required:
  - Placing a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) that staff can be behind in order to conduct screening at entrances to protect from droplets; OR
  - The need for medical (surgical/procedure) masks and eye protection, ABHR, tissue, and lined no-touch waste basket or bin to screen staff in situations where a physical barrier is not available and close contact with an individual is likely to occur.

name and contact information of every patron that enters an area of the establishment and must maintain the record for a period of at least 30 days. Under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, contact information is required to be retrieved prior to entering the business or organization in the following settings; meeting or event spaces, conference centres, convention centres, restaurants and bars, food or drink establishments with dance facilities, personal fitness trainers, businesses that provide in-person or driving instruction, tour and guide services including boat tours, sports and fitness facilities, organized public events, photography studios, casinos or gaming establishments, bingo halls, strip clubs, bathhouses, and sex clubs.

6. Ensure that any person in the indoor area of the premises of the business or organization, or in a vehicle that is operating as part of the business or organization (including members of the public), wears a mask or face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin during any period when they are in the indoor area of the premises unless exempt under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c.17*, as amended, and associated Regulations. Further, **eye protection** (safety goggles, face shields) shall be used in the event that a worker is unable to maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres from an unmasked individual. A face shield alone without a mask or face covering is not considered adequate covering of the face.
7. Ensure that **physical distancing** of workers takes place by at least 2 metres throughout the workplace, where reasonably possible, and during eating and rest periods (i.e., lunchrooms, change rooms). One-way walkways and workflows shall be provided where applicable (e.g. in walkways less than 2 meters in width) to reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between individuals, including between workers. Stagger shifts and breaks and/or adjust production schedules to reduce occupancy to limit only as many persons as can be accommodated such that 2 metres distancing between persons can be maintained where reasonably possible. Create work cohorts where reasonably possible to effectively reduce the number of physical interactions between individuals.
8. If a worker is providing direct care to a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19, regardless of where in the premises this occurs, ensure the worker wears **appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)**. A point-of-care risk assessment must occur and at a minimum, PPE must include a medical mask and eye protection (safety goggles, face shields). A face shield is not a replacement for a medical mask or face covering.
9. Ensure supplies and facilities are provided for adequate **hand hygiene** to take place in work and rest/eating areas within the workplace including the supply of 60-90% alcohol-based hand rub for workers and clients.
10. Take appropriate **infection prevention and control measures** including reminders on respiratory etiquette, frequent environmental cleaning in all areas accessible to the public, including washrooms, check-out counters, concession stands, and other high-touch surfaces (i.e., doorknobs, accessible/elevator buttons, pay machines, etc.) using disinfectants with a drug identification number (D.I.N.) while ensuring manufacturer instructions for use are followed.
11. 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 to the degree most possible, and ensure the use of increased ventilation to the outdoors (i.e., through a partially open window) in vehicles, where possible.
12. Conduct, or have the property owner or landlord of the premises of the business or organization conduct a regular review of **heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems** in the workplace to ensure that HVAC and supplemental ventilation/filtration systems are regularly maintained and in proper working order with the goal of HVAC system and unit optimization.

13. Ensure that upon request from SMDHU, that information requested is provided to SMDHU as it relates to information required for case and contact management as well as for outbreak management. This may include but is not limited to, accurate and updated **contact information** for all workers (and clients if prescribed in the *Reopening Ontario Act* and/or its Regulations or this letter of instruction), site plans and staff schedules. In addition to **legislated requirements** under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990*, ensure any further instructions, directions and guidance provided by SMDHU, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Government of Ontario and/or the Government of Canada pertaining to COVID-19 are followed. 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 SMDHU.

You are required to comply with the above instructions as provided by the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* and any Regulations made under it, as they are advice, recommendations and/or instructions of a public health official in the local health unit servicing your business or organization. The instructions set out above shall be in full force and effect until further notice despite any changes to the SMDHU's step of reopening under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID19) Act, 2020* as may be amended from time to time.

For the purpose of these Instructions:

- “worker” means any employee, independent contractor (including ‘temporary’ agencies, manager, director, officer, owner, partner, shareholder, volunteer, student or any other person engaged in the business or organization activity at the workplace.)
- “workplace” means any land, premises, work vehicle, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works.
- Enforcement associated with these instructions may be conducted by police officers as well as provincial offences officers (which includes but is not limited to municipal bylaw enforcement officers and public health enforcement personnel).
- Any reference to mask or face covering in this letter is as per the Province of Ontario’s COVID-19 regulatory framework requirement, under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, which require a mask or face covering to be worn “in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin.”

These measures are intended to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 where the collective efforts of various sectors, including workplaces are required to protect our communities.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

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