

November 26, 2020

To persons responsible for a business or organization in the municipalities in 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.**

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

As the transmission of COVID-19 continues to grow within Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), and indeed throughout the rest of the province and the country, we are facing a critical time in our fight against this disease. We must reinforce and increase our efforts to contain its spread. This second wave of transmission impacts our lives, our businesses, our work, and the ability of our healthcare system to manage the increased demands on its services.

Our local data indicates that COVID-19 cases in our area are at the highest levels to date, confirming the upward surge of this disease, currently placing us in the Orange/Restrict level of the province's current [COVID-19 Response Framework](#). Furthermore, in keeping with provincial projections we are on track for much higher disease levels unless we take more action to curb its spread.

Key factors contributing to transmission is close contact between individuals in both work and social settings, which then spreads the disease easily to individuals within households. In particular, since September 2020, SMDHU has observed a substantial increase in workplace transmission, often resulting in outbreaks. This is due, in part, to a failure of workplaces 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 issuing the following Instruction 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.

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

Effective **November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 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. Appoint a **Compliance Officer** responsible for the implementation of a COVID-19 safety plan (as described in section 5 of Schedule 1 of O.Reg. 364/20) and the compliance with that safety plan and the implementation and compliance with all required and recommended occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control measures.
2. Enable **remote work** for workers, where reasonably possible, to reduce the number of workers exposed to the workplace.
3. Ensure workplace **active screening** is conducted daily for all workers attending the workplace in-person. Screening should occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift.

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2-25 King Street S.  
Cookstown, ON  
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2-5 Pineridge Gate  
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☐ **Huntsville:**  
34 Chaffey St.  
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☐ **Midland:**  
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Midland, ON  
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705-526-9324  
FAX: 705-526-1513

☐ **Orillia:**  
120-169 Front St. S.  
Orillia, ON  
L3V 4S8  
705-325-9565  
FAX: 705-325-2091

4. Ensure that **physical distancing** of workers takes place by at least 2 metres in 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 to reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between individuals, including between workers.
5. **Barriers such as plexiglass** should be used where reasonably possible, in particular in environments where physical distancing cannot take place.
6. Ensure appropriate use of **masks or face coverings**, in accordance with the Regulations under the Reopening Ontario Act: *The person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall 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, 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, unless the person in the indoor area performs work for the business or organization in an area that is not accessible to members of the public and is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while in the indoor area. Face shields are not an appropriate substitution for a mask or face covering.*
7. Ensure appropriate use of **personal protective equipment**, in accordance with the Regulations under the Reopening Ontario Act: *A person shall wear appropriate personal protective equipment that provides protection of the person's eyes, nose and mouth if, in the course of providing services, the person, (a) is required to come within two metres of another person who is not wearing a mask or face covering in a manner that covers that person's mouth, nose and chin during any period when that person is in an indoor area; and (b) is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier from a person described in 7(a).*
8. 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 alcohol-based hand rub for workers and visitors.
9. Take appropriate **infection prevention and control measures** 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.).
10. Minimize instances of more than one individual per vehicle for **driving associated with work**, and when unavoidable, ensure face coverings 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.
11. Conduct, or have the property owner or landlord conduct a regular review of **heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems** in the workplace, except motor vehicles, to ensure they are functioning and in good working order and report any problems to the SMDHU.
12. Ensure that accurate and updated **contact information** for all workers is available to be produced to SMDHU within 24 hours of request from SMDHU in support of case management and contact tracing requirements for COVID-19.
13. Ensure that all **unplanned absences** by workers are investigated by the Compliance Officer for any risk of COVID-19 exposure, and, those workers with COVID-19 symptoms or who have been identified as a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19, are to be encouraged by the Compliance Officer to self-isolate

and seek assessment and testing. The worker should be directed to the [SMDHU Order](#) dated October 6, 2020 regarding self-isolation.

14. Follow all **legislative requirements** to protect worker health and safety (Occupational Health and Safety Act), and any further instructions, directions and guidance provided by SMDHU, the Government of Ontario and Federal Government pertaining to COVID-19 and the terms of these Instructions. 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.

Please be reminded that you are required to comply with the above instructions as set out in the Regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.

For the purpose of these Instructions:

- “worker” means any employee, independent contractor, 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 place, space, building or vehicle used in or for the operation of a business or organization.
- Enforcement associated with these instructions may be conducted by police officers as well as provincial offences officers (which includes municipal bylaw officers and public health enforcement personnel).

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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