

Instructions from the Medical Officer of Health

Pursuant to Subsection 2 (2.1) of Schedule 1 of O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020

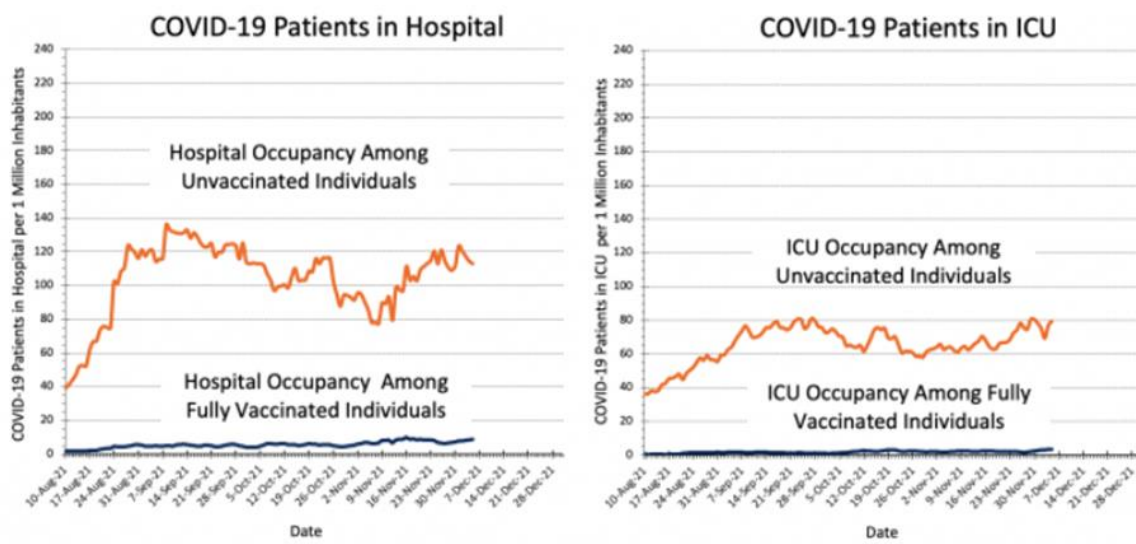
ISSUED: December 13, 2021

TO: All Owners, Operators and Persons Responsible for businesses, and organizations where people are employed or volunteer (i.e., ‘workplaces’) in the City of Peterborough and/or County of Peterborough

RE: Medical Officer of Health Instructions regarding working from home, limiting on-site interactions, and restricting celebrations and seasonal parties

The geographical region and the Province of Ontario are experiencing increased rates of transmission of COVID-19, primarily as a result of high proportion of delta and omicron variants of concern.¹ The delta variant is more than twice as transmissible than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, which means it can spread rapidly when the recommended protective measures are not in place.² More worrisome is that “spread of the new Omicron variant will likely drive COVID-19 cases above current projections.”³ “Cases continue to rise substantially, even without Omicron. To flatten the curve, we need to reduce transmission by increasing vaccination and public health measures.”⁴ In jurisdictions in Ontario where omicron has been identified the speed of spread unprecedentedly quick. As of December 13th, a majority of cases of COVID-19 are caused by the omicron variant of concern. Therefore, precautionary measures are needed until a greater proportion of our region has received a 3rd dose of COVID-19 vaccination.

Peterborough Public Health is obligated to [monitor trends both locally and provincially](#) and make decisions accordingly to best protect our community. Looking at the data as of December 6th, 2021 it is clear this has become a pandemic of the unvaccinated:



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However, fully vaccinated individuals are also at risk of acquiring and transmitting COVID-19, especially with waning immunity, which is why all Ontarians are encouraged to receive booster doses as soon as they become eligible.⁶ The virus can be transmitted through respiratory droplets and aerosols when breathing, coughing, singing, sneezing, etc.

These infectious droplets and aerosols can then reach someone through direct contact (droplet) or remain airborne and be inhaled (aerosol), especially in indoor spaces. The more time that is spent in indoor spaces allows for greater airborne spreading of aerosols. Limit the amount of time spent inside and close to non-household members.

Mobility indicators of high-risk settings continue to show transmission in workplaces across the province:



Transmission is happening in settings where mixed populations are gathering - including at workplaces as noted in the chart above. People that are older who are gathering with people that are younger, coupled with people who have been vaccinated that are gathering with people that have not been vaccinated, creates ideal grounds for transmission to occur.

Our situation could continue to get worse with the winter months when more people will be inside for longer periods of time, and there are further concerns about the Omicron variant and the socializing that occurs with the holiday season. With the emergence of the Omicron variant, it is clear that vaccinated individuals can also transmit the infection. Therefore, multiple strategies are important to prevent transmission.

For these reasons, **effective at 12:01 a.m. on December 15, 2021, all persons responsible for a workplace shall ensure compliance with the following instructions:**

- Part A: WORK FROM HOME EXCEPT WHERE ON-SITE PRESENCE IS REQUIRED;
- Part B: ON-SITE, LIMIT INTERACTIONS;
- Part C: LIMITING SEASONAL PARTIES; and
- PART D: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

PART A: WORK FROM HOME EXCEPT WHERE ON-SITE PRESENCE IS REQUIRED

1. Any person who performs work for the workplace, business, or organization must conduct their work remotely, unless the nature of their work requires them to be on-site at the workplace.

Part B: ON-SITE, LIMIT INTERACTIONS

All onsite interactions must be limited. This includes conducting meetings virtually, when feasible to do so.

Any person who is required to perform work in-person, 'on site' must:

1. Ensure that workers are physically distanced by at least 2m when at their workstations, or separated by physical barriers;
2. If it is not possible to meet requirement number one (1) above, for example in vehicles or confined work spaces, ensure that workers wear tightly-fitting masks when not physically distanced, or when moving throughout the workplace;
3. Stagger lunches and breaks to maximize distance and minimize interactions; and
4. Ensure that lunchrooms and break areas are arranged and posted with a maximum occupancy to maintain physical distance between employees using the spaces while eating and drinking.

Part C: LIMITING SEASONAL PARTIES

1. Gatherings amongst staff, workers, volunteers, etc. are prohibited from occurring within the workplace. Celebrations for social purposes are highly discouraged at this time. If such gatherings are necessary, they must be hosted at a premise where there are additional public health measures in place, including proof of vaccine, active screening, and contact tracing requirements. Acceptable premises include meeting and event facilities and food premises.

PART D: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The instructions above are in addition to the regulatory requirements outlined in [O. Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step](#). You also have requirements under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990](#) to protect your employees while at work, this includes from infectious disease: [COVID-19 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

Be reminded that you must also implement the following public health measures within your workplace:

1. All staff and volunteers must be [actively screened](#) before the start of their shift. A recorded attestation that the person passed the screening must be stored for 30 days.
2. [Passive screening posters](#) must be posted at all entrances to your building.
3. All areas must be [cleaned and disinfected](#) as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
4. [Review your COVID-19 safety plan](#) with your leadership team and share it with your staff. Make any updates as is necessary, and ensure a copy of the plan is posted for both staff and patrons to access.

The following recommendations should be implemented jointly with the requirements noted above:

1. Meeting/working in well ventilated spaces, while wearing tight fitting masks are two ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Where possible, open the windows to increase ventilation. Ensure your HVAC system is operating per manufactures standards and is inspected regularly.
 - a. [Core Recommendations for Reducing Airborne Infectious Aerosol Exposure](#)
2. Consider enrolling your workplace in the [Rapid Antigen Screening Program](#). Businesses (including non-chamber members) with 150 employees or less can access free screening kits.
3. Peterborough Public Health as issued a [formal recommendation](#) urging workplaces to have COVID-19 vaccination policies. To put it simply, all [staff should be vaccinated](#).

Additional Resources for Workplaces:

- [COVID-19 public health measures and advice: For businesses, organizations and facilities](#)
- [COVID-19 Recommendations for Office Staff](#)
- [Workplace Physical Distancing Poster](#)
- [COVID-19 and workplace health and safety](#)

These instructions are enforceable in accordance with the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#) (“the ROA), and will be monitored and enforced by Public Health Inspectors. Failure to comply may result in charges being laid in accordance with the ROA and the [Provincial Offences Act, 1990](#). (the POA). If charged under Part I of the POA, set fine amounts are \$750 for individuals and \$1000 for corporations. Maximum penalties based on prosecution under Part I or Part III of the POA include fines of up to \$100,000 and up to a year in jail for an individual, up to \$500,000 and up to a year in jail for an individual who is a director or officer of a corporation, and up to \$10 million for a corporation.

If you have questions or concerns about these Instructions or the associated implementation, please contact our office at (705) 743-1000 to speak with a Public Health Inspector (PHI). Be prepared to provide the location of your workplace to be referred to the designated inspector for the area. Please note that this Letter of Instruction will be posted on PPH’s website at: www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/public-health-orders

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Dr. Thomas Piggott, MD MSc CCFP FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

¹ Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables December 7, 2021. Retrieved December 9, 2021 from https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Update-on-COVID-19-Projections_2021.12.07_English-2.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jüni P, Maltsev A, Katz GM, Perkhun A, Yan S, Bodmer NS. Ontario dashboard. (2021) *Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table*. Retrieved December 9, 2021 from <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/ontario-dashboard/>

⁶ Government of Ontario. Ontario Taking Action to Protect Against Omicron Variant. December 10, 2021. Retrieved from: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001327/ontario-taking-action-to-protect-against-omicron-variant>

⁷ Jüni P, Maltsev A, Katz GM, Perkhun A, Yan S, Bodmer NS. Ontario dashboard. (2021) *Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table*. Retrieved December 9, 2021 from <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/ontario-dashboard/>