

December 15, 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.**

**Please note that this letter of instruction replaces my [letter](#) on this matter dated December 2, 2020, and is intended to address the fact that Simcoe Muskoka is now designated to be within the Red / Control zone, in keeping with the [Provincial COVID-19 Framework](#).**

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:

- A licensed child care program that is in compliance with guidance issued by the Ministry of Education;
- 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;
- Personal care service providers as described in and regulated by the Reopening Ontario Act and/or its Regulations, as amended;
- Schools and school boards licensed under the *Education Act, 1990*; and
- 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.

**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 indicating that our health unit is placed in one of the most restrictive levels 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.

**Barrie:**  
15 Sperling Drive  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 6K9  
705-721-7520  
FAX: 705-721-1495

**Collingwood:**  
280 Pretty River Pkwy.  
Collingwood, ON  
L9Y 4J5  
705-445-0804  
FAX: 705-445-6498

**Cookstown:**  
2-25 King Street S.  
Cookstown, ON  
L0L 1L0  
705-458-1103  
FAX: 705-458-0105

**Gravenhurst:**  
2-5 Pineridge Gate  
Gravenhurst, ON  
P1P 1Z3  
705-684-9090  
FAX: 705-684-9887

**Huntsville:**  
34 Chaffey St.  
Huntsville, ON  
P1H 1K1  
705-789-8813  
FAX: 705-789-7245

**Midland:**  
A-925 Hugel Ave.  
Midland, ON  
L4R 1X8  
705-526-9324  
FAX: 705-526-1513

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

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 **December 5<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 the Reopening Ontario Act and/or its Regulations, as amended) and the compliance with that safety plan, as well as 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](#)<sup>1</sup> is conducted daily for all workers attending the workplace. Screening should 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.
4. 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 to reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between individuals, including between workers.
5. **Physical barriers**<sup>2</sup> (such as **plexiglas**) should be used where reasonably possible, in particular in environments where physical distancing cannot take place. Physical distancing is preferable to the use of barriers where reasonably possible.

---

<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 before entering.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained during screening the following is required:
  - Placing a physical barrier (ie. plexiglas) 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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](#)

6. For the indoor area of the premises, **which is accessible to members of the public**, ensure each worker wears a **face covering** in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, and as best as possible, maintains a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while in the indoor area. A face shield alone is not considered adequate covering of the face. Reasonable exceptions are permitted for those who cannot tolerate face coverings.
7. For the indoor area of the premises, **which is not accessible to members of the public**, ensure each worker wears a **face covering** in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin, unless they are 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 is not 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. A face shield alone is not considered adequate covering of the face.
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. A face shield is not a replacement for a medical mask.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Take appropriate **infection prevention and control measures** such as 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.).
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Ensure that accurate and updated **contact information** for all workers (and clients if prescribed in the Reopening Ontario Act and/or its Regulations, as amended) 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.
15. In addition to **legislated requirements** under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990*, ensure any further instructions, directions and guidance provided by SMDHU, 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.

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 land, premises, 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 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

CG:cm