

September 3, 2021

Dear employers and business operators in the Middlesex-London region,

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted our community and unfortunately with the widespread circulation of the Delta variant, the risk of COVID-19 transmission in workplaces still exists this fall. Cases and outbreaks continue to be seen in a wide range of workplaces and public settings.

To avoid broad closures of workplaces across our community, we need to work together now to make all workplaces and indoor settings as safe as possible. There are many public health measures that will help keep workplaces safe and open, including those that many have already implemented such as symptom screening, physical distancing, masking and hand hygiene. However, more than any of these, mandatory vaccination policies have the potential to prevent cases, outbreaks, deaths, and business closures.

Therefore, I strongly recommend that **all** employers and business operators:

**1) Ensure that staff, volunteers, on-site contractors, and patrons are fully vaccinated, if eligible.**

- Effective September 22, 2021, the [Provincial government has required](#) that Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination along with photo ID to access higher-risk public settings and facilities. All settings and facilities identified by the Province should ensure that they are in compliance with these requirements as soon as possible.
- In addition, it is strongly recommended that **all** employers and business operators require any employees who have any in-person interaction in the workplace to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with the rare exception being those individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to permitted exemptions (medical and other protected grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*). This recommendation applies to both higher-risk settings identified by the Province and all other employers and business operators.
- The Middlesex-London Health Unit has developed a [Primer for Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policies](#) that will assist employers in implementing mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policies.

**2) Implement remote work where reasonably possible.**

- Whenever possible it is recommended that businesses allow employees to work from home and/or implement remote operations such as providing delivery or pick-up for goods and providing services remotely (e.g. online or by phone).

**3) Ensure physical distancing of at least 2 metres, where reasonably possible.**

- Physical distancing is particularly important when employees are eating or drinking.
- Stagger shifts and breaks to reduce occupancy in break rooms and ensure 2 metres distance between persons can be maintained where reasonably possible in all areas of the workspace
- One-way walkways and workflows can reduce the potential for and occurrence of close physical interaction between workers.
- Create work cohorts where possible to reduce the number of physical interactions between individuals in the workplace.

**4) Regardless of vaccination status, ensure that active screening for COVID-19 symptoms is conducted daily for employees attending the workplace.**

- Screening of employees should occur before or when they enter the workplace at the beginning of their shift.

- Workers who fail active screening (by answering any question 'yes' in the [provincial screening tool](#)) must go get tested and be restricted from entering the workplace.

**5) Regardless of their vaccination status, ensure that any person in the indoor area of a workplace wears a mask or face covering.**

- A mask or face covering must cover an individual's mouth, nose and chin during any period when in the indoor area of a 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.

Implementation of these critical public health measures will ensure that the risk of COVID-19 transmission is reduced in our workplaces and businesses. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of your employees and patrons, and your support of the pandemic response in the Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Mackie'.

Christopher Mackie MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health  
Middlesex-London Health Unit