COVID-19 Workplace Measures Lifted

Effective August 1, 2021 the majority of COVID-19 workplace controls will be eased. Over 60% of the eligible population in Edmonton has been fully immunized and COVID-19 case rates have declined significantly. As controls are lifted, it is critical for all employees to understand how these changes impact their workplace. We continue to monitor COVID-19 and will communicate should there be a need to reinstate additional workplace controls.

Key Messages:

Effective August 1, 2021, most of the COVID-19 controls in place for City employees will no longer be required.

- As an employer with a strong commitment to occupational health and safety, we are continuing with some COVID-19 workplace measures to ensure the continued health, safety and welfare of City employees and persons at City worksites.
- Employees are returning to work in City facilities with varying levels of comfort and emotions. Be proactive in creating a supportive work environment by demonstrating awareness, vulnerability, and empathy.
- If you are not well, you are to stay home and contact your supervisor.
- The choice to be vaccinated is personal and must be respected in the workplace.

What will Remain in Place?

- **COVID-19 Pre-Shift Screening** - all employees are still required to perform [Pre-Shift Screening](#) before leaving for your place of work.
- **Isolation and quarantine** - All [isolation and quarantine requirements](#) and benefits remain the same until further notice.
- **COVID-19 vaccinations** - The City encourages employees to make an informed choice on vaccination and strongly encourages participation by all employees who are able to be vaccinated.
  - Reminder - Do not ask a colleague whether they have been vaccinated. Model respectful workplace behaviours in any conversations about vaccines.
  - Please continue to voluntarily report when you have received the COVID-19 vaccination using the anonymous [COVID-19 Vaccination Employee Intake Form](#). This form does not ask for an employee's name and is used for the purposes of monitoring the organization's overall rate of immunizations.
  - **Cleaning, disinfection and personal hygiene** - Along with the regular scheduled cleaning and disinfecting protocols, each employee will wipe down their individual workspace as well as commonly touched surfaces and perform personal hygiene practices.
- **COVID-19 Hazard Assessment** - Leaders will review the [COVID-19 Hazard Assessment](#) with their teams prior to the restrictions changing on August 1, 2021.
Suggestions As We Move Forward

Face Coverings / Masks - Masks are optional in all City workplaces and vehicles (except when riding in a transit vehicle or a hazard assessment for a work area or task identifies the need). It is important to respect the choice to wear, or not wear, a mask.

Physical distancing - It is no longer required to keep a distance of two metres (six feet) from your co-workers, however, please be courteous and maintain a distance if someone asks you to. There are two recommended practices that are suggested to continue to lower the transmission of viruses:

- The use of a protective shield wherever possible. An evaluation/assessment could be completed to determine if one is still suitable and has additional safety or other functions.
- Staggering start times and breaks, as operationally feasible; to reduce the number of people in lunchrooms or other common areas.
- Respiratory best practices - Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes. Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Stay home if you feel sick.

Workplace Gyms - Training facilities can reopen. Consider limiting the number of people participating at one time and continue with the cleaning and disinfection of equipment.

All gatherings (including meetings and training) - Meetings and training are permitted. Until September 20, 2021 the number of attendees must be within the 33% occupancy rate for the floor (unless a higher occupancy in the building has been approved).

It is recommended that you consider slowly increasing the number of attendees over the next few months, maintain as much spacing as possible, and allow virtual participation where feasible.

Mental Health and Wellbeing - To help cope with this transition, we encourage everyone to consider activities that can help to reduce stress: practice mindful movements or yoga, listen to soothing music, spend time with your favorite people, go for a walk or write in a journal. For more information, go to: Wellness Resources.

FAQ

Why are some COVID-19 controls still in effect? As an employer, the City has a continued responsibility to ensure employees are protected in the workplace and that includes setting safety measures that are sometimes different from public health measures. Maintenance of COVID-19 controls and precautions will allow the City to rapidly respond to variants of concern and mitigate transmission in our workplace.

Now that in-person meetings are allowed, does that mean that I can have my entire team of 30 people together in a boardroom? Until September 20 the meeting must be within the 33% occupancy rate for the floor and should consider spacing for attendees. It is recommended that you ease back into holding large in-person meetings. If you wish to have everyone together, consider an outdoor space.

If I just have a runny nose and a slight cough, can I come to work if I wear a mask? We appreciate your dedication; however, if you are not well, you must stay home and contact your supervisor.

What if I am not comfortable working at a worksite with others who are not vaccinated? There are reasons why someone may choose not to be vaccinated or be unable to receive the vaccine and everyone is entitled to privacy and understanding regarding their decision. Vaccines are one control measure to limit the spread of COVID-19. All employees are required to continue to follow workplace safety measures for pre-shift screening, cleaning and disinfecting, keep practicing good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and stay home when sick. These practices remain important lines of defence against transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses.