COVID-19 Workplace Measures

The Alberta Government announced the province will enter Stage 3 of the Open for Summer Plan on July 1. 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 restrictions. We also want each employee to have a reasonable opportunity to be fully vaccinated before safety controls change at their place of employment to ensure all feel safe and to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Based on the vaccine eligibility criteria, some employees who want to, may not be fully vaccinated on July 5 and so we want to provide additional time for those employees to become fully vaccinated.

As public health restrictions are lifted, it is critical for all leaders and employees to understand how these changes impact their workplace. These measures are particularly important to review for employees who have been temporarily working from home.

Key Messages:

● Continue status quo with all COVID-19 controls remaining in place for City of Edmonton employees until August 1, 2021.
● As an employer with a strong commitment to occupational health and safety, the City is going beyond the minimum OH&S requirements so that employees are safe and feel safe.
● Maintenance of COVID-19 controls and precautions will allow the City to rapidly respond to variants of concern or if cases begin to increase.
● As part of the reintegration plan, employees will be permitted to return into office buildings up to a capacity of 33% starting July 5, 2021.

Below are the COVID-19 controls in the workplace that remain in effect until August 1, 2021, along with some of the measures that will change slightly on July 1, 2021.

What is Staying the Same?

Face Coverings / Masking -- remain mandatory at all times in all indoor spaces while working for or at a City-run or operated by property, subject only to limited exceptions*. This includes all employees, visitors who are meeting with an employee, delivery personnel and contractors at locations where workers are present.

Physical distancing -- maintain a minimum distance of 2 meters (or 6 feet) between yourself and others as much as reasonably possible.

COVID-19 pre-shift screening -- all employees are required to perform Pre-Shift Screening before leaving for your place of work.

Rapid response to positive cases in the workplace -- employees may still experience symptoms, therefore, it is important to continue to respond quickly and appropriately - Supervisor Toolkit for Pre-Shift Screening and Rapid Response.
Cleaning, disinfection and personal hygiene -- cleaning and disinfection practices are important to continue; it is an expectation that, along with the regular scheduled cleaning and disinfecting protocols, each employee must wipe down their individual workspace as well as commonly touched surfaces and perform personal hygiene practices.

Isolation and quarantine -- All isolation and quarantine requirements and benefits remain the same until further notice.

Indoor gatherings including meetings and training -- no indoor social gatherings are permitted in workplaces. Social gatherings are where people move freely around to associate, mix or interact with each other for social purposes.

- **SHARED SPACES** -- Lounges and lunchrooms should be used for the purposes of preparing or eating meals, not socializing afterward. Given reduced occupancy in these rooms needed to achieve physical distancing, employees are asked to be considerate of other employees waiting to prepare or eat their meals. This can be achieved through staggered and scheduled use to effectively reduce occupants at any given time.
- **MEETINGS** -- All meetings are to continue to be conducted virtually unless an in person meeting is deemed necessary. If it is deemed necessary to hold an in person meeting, attendance must be limited and COVID-19 measures followed including 2 metre physical distancing and mandatory masking.
- **TRAINING** -- Only training that has been deemed operationally necessary is to be conducted in person, otherwise all training, if at all possible, is to be conducted virtually or scheduled for a future date.

COVID-19 vaccinations and voluntary reporting -- As of June 18, everyone born in 2009 or before (turning 12+) can get their first and second dose. Please continue to voluntarily report when you have received the COVID-19 vaccination, or the reason why you choose not to be vaccinated, using the anonymous COVID-19 Vaccination Employee Intake Form.

FAQ:

With the COVID-19 controls being extended, would visitors, contractors, and members of the public also be expected to follow suit? Contractors and visitors who are working in our workplaces are expected to comply with our COVID-19 controls, including masking. For members of the public who are patrons in recreational centers or other City facilities operational policies for controls will apply.

What is Changing?

**Workplace Gyms** -- training facilities can start to open but must operate by adhering to current provincial health Orders and follow the applicable guidance stipulated in Stage 2.

**Outdoor gatherings** -- are permitted as long as physical distancing can be maintained and is part of a core business function.
**Temporary work from home** -- Effective July 5, 2021, the City of Edmonton will launch Phase 2 of the Workplace Reintegration Plan, which means an increased threshold of up to 33% occupancy in all City offices, including high rises. Leaders will work with their teams to determine who may be required to attend the worksite for business reasons.

As people transition back into the workplace, employees and leaders should reference the [Employee Reorientation to the Workplace](#) and [COVID-19 Workplace Inspection Procedure for Leaders](#) prior to having their teams return into the workplace.

As of September 20, 2021, it is expected that all City workspaces will be able to operate at 100% capacity.

**Making Your Way as Restrictions Change**

The reorientation process can create a variety of emotions, with the potential to be difficult or stressful for some. After over a year of absorbing and managing many uncertainties, employees are faced with change yet again as they anticipate new experiences in the workplace, society, and their social interactions.

Employees may have uncertainty about returning to work in the office, easing restrictions in their workplace, or the new changes in general which may include but not be limited to:

- Caregiving responsibilities
- Transportation requirements
- Changes in routine
- Concern for the physical safety of self and loved ones
- Anxieties around vaccines
- Working relationships
- Fear of missing out on informal connections or advances if working from home
- The speed of reopening
- Learning how to interact and work in a new setting

**Resources Available:**

Changes like these can be difficult to navigate. For more information and ideas on resources available to City employees during times of change and uncertainty go to: [Wellness Resources for City Employees](#).