Guidelines for Building Evacuations During COVID-19 Pandemic
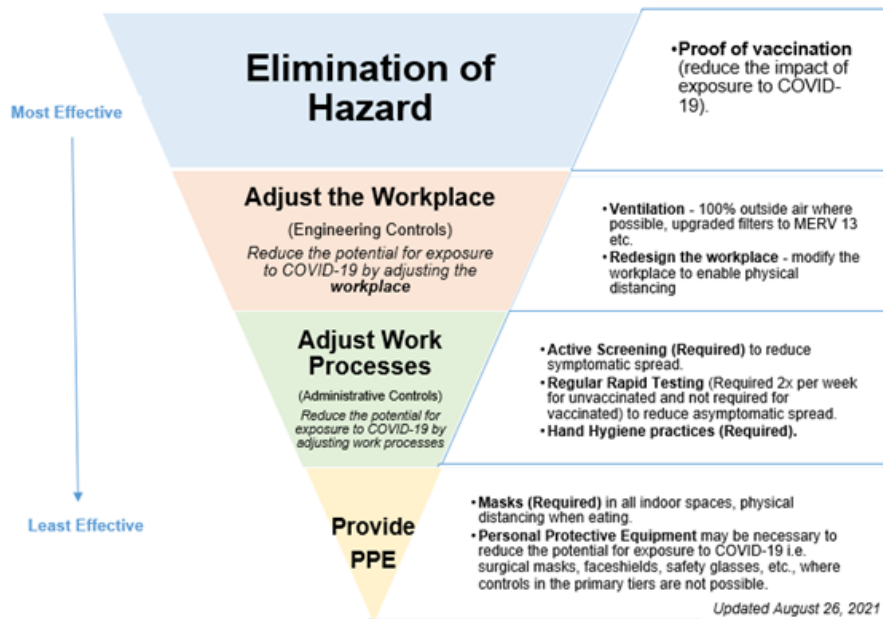
Scope

The guidelines outlined in this document will assist in the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to **Building Evacuations** and will help to ensure the appropriate COVID-19 health and safety considerations for the protection of all members of the McMaster community.

Contents

For more information, contact [Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)](#)
Updated as of September 2, 2021

Hierarchy of Hazard Control

Hazard mitigation should always focus on implementing control measures to eliminate or reduce risk. For this purpose, the hierarchy of controls must be considered. This hierarchy can be applied to any hazard in the workplace including COVID-19. A brief overview of this concept is highlighted below.

Evacuation Guidelines

Physical distancing should be practiced throughout the evacuation process, including after evacuation is complete, when occupants are gathered outside of the building awaiting re-entry.

Upon Hearing the Fire Alarm

- Ensure you are wearing a mask when evacuating.
- Leave by the nearest Emergency Exit. If you cannot leave the building remain in your room and notify Security Services at by contacting extension 88 or by dialing 905-522-4135 from a cell phone.
- If you are at an offsite location from main campus, please follow the specific evacuation plans of that host location.
- Do not use the elevators.
- Always have a plan, ensure items that you may need are readily available to take with you (i.e. medication).

Evacuating the Building

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- While evacuating the building, use any stairwell.
- While exiting the building, try to maintain 2 metres (6 feet) distance unless this significantly delays the evacuation process.
- Once outside, maintain physical distancing, this may mean moving further from the building than usual.
- Always stay within close enough proximity to the building so that your whereabouts can be accounted for.
- For those at off-site locations, please follow host-site protocols and contact your site administrator for specific information related to those protocols at your site.

Fire Safety Considerations

- Fire doors & doors part of a Fire separation should not be propped open. If propped open these doors will not function properly in an emergency.
- Ensure COVID safety measures do not obstruct exit or safe evacuation of the workspace.
- Ensure signage or holders for signage do not block or obstruct fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers or pull stations.

Questions? Contact EOHSS at eohss@mcmaster.ca or FHSSO at fhsso@mcmaster.ca

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