

# Guidelines for Clinical Areas and Waiting Rooms during the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Scope

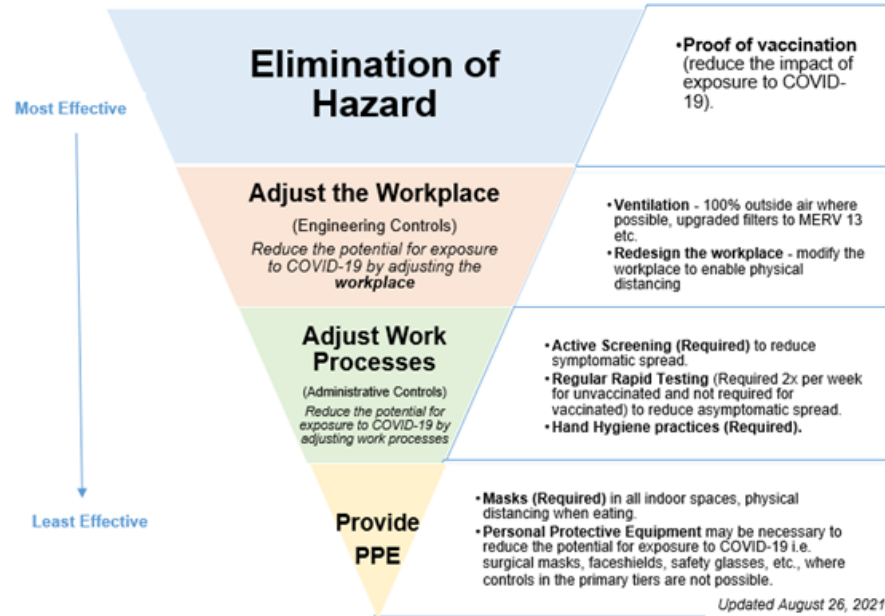
The guidelines outlined in this document will assist in the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to **Clinical Areas and Waiting Rooms** and will help to ensure the appropriate COVID-19 health and safety considerations for the protection of all members of the McMaster community.

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## 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.



## Screening and Tracking

All individuals must complete screening using the MacCheck digital tool within 1 hour before arriving on campus. If an individual is feeling unwell in any way they are to stop work, inform their team and supervisor immediately, and complete the [Government of Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#). The results of this tool will determine next steps for that person.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Face Coverings

Please refer to the [Guidelines/Protocols for Face Coverings and Masks During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) for information on face covering protocols while on campus.

## Physical Distancing

### Barriers

- Barriers are only to be considered for workstations that cannot be appropriately spaced such as client/student facing areas.
- Barriers do not replace the need for face coverings.
- If after other considerations (spacing workstations, rotational schedules, etc.) barriers are necessary, submit a work order with Facility Services (or location-specific building services) for materials and installation.

### **Wayfinding**

- Decals and/or tape to show 2 m (6 ft) spacing, directional arrows to limit cross-traffic coming in and out of clinic spaces for patients.
- “Stop Here and Wait” signage.

### **Furniture Separation**

- Furniture is separated at least 2 m (6 ft) apart in waiting rooms, however family members can sit together.

## **Procedures**

### **Booking Appointments**

- Alter patient booking and appointment scheduling to manage flow of people coming into space.
- Direct patients to refrain from bringing visitors and otherwise only bring one other member/visitor/family member with them.

### **Screening**

- Where feasible, provide a screening station (staffed or not staffed manned) at the entry point to the clinic where building-wide screening is not implemented.
- Screening stations, where present, to be well signed and instructions simple and easy to follow.
- Staff must complete screening as required through their host employment site.

### **Exam Rooms**

- At times, a student/resident, preceptor and patient may be together in a small room.
- Where unable to distance 2 m (6 ft), personal protective equipment will be used, including surgical masks and disposable gloves.
- If treating for respiratory reasons or COVID-19 symptoms, will additionally wear N95 masks, face shields, and gown.

## Hygiene Practices

### Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands often with soap and water or if hand washing is not possible, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with greater than 60% alcohol content) when hands are visibly soiled, before and after patient visits, before and after any breaks, at the beginning and end of the shift, and before preparing food.
- Universal masking as required at Hamilton Health Services (HHS).
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, use a tissue or sleeve.
- If you use a tissue, discard immediately and wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after.
- Wash hands/sanitize before and after entering elevators – have signage outside of elevators providing guidance.
- Hand sanitizer/disinfectant wipes should be placed between all exam rooms, common areas, front desk, kitchen, offices, break rooms, etc.
- Alter dress code practices – scrubs or comfortable clothing should be worn that are easy to wash.
- Change into work clothes/scrubs when at work, and back to street clothes after work, using changing space provided. Place work clothes into a pillowcase, then wash all items when you get home.
- Have clinic specific shoes, only for clinic use, that stay in the clinic.

### Cleaning of Spaces

- Provide direction for staff to clean their vehicles, if needed, and wipe down touched surfaces (see [Vehicle Guidelines document](#)).
- All staff can be given Ziploc bags with wipes and individual hand sanitizer bottles for personal use to keep in vehicles.
- Cleaning staff within building as full-time arrangement.
- Washroom is cleaned 3 times a day, or more as needed.
- Clean the common touch areas (door handles, hard surfaces) several times a day.
- Clinical staff can clean exam rooms after visit when possible, to avoid cleaning staff donning additional PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). Typically done with disinfectant wipes by clinical staff.
- If a patient comes in with symptoms of COVID-19, the exam room will be given a deep clean with sanitizing disinfectants.

- Following the directions on the cleaning agents, the cleaner will don full PPE (gown, mask, visor, gloves) prior to cleaning and follow appropriate PPE protocols.
- Wash hands or sanitize after properly removing PPE.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- Universal masking as required at Hamilton Health Services (HHS).
- Healthcare workers should be trained on the use and limitations of PPE available and how to make the correct choice for the situation
- Communicate to patients/ visitors to come wearing their own face covering, so that they can limit exposure to other members. If they do not have one, there will be one provided.

### **Resources**

- Public Health Ontario [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada [Prevention and Risks](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Government of Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- Public Services Health and Safety Association - [Precautions when Working in Administration in Healthcare](#)