

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

To: All Staff and Professional Staff

From: Dr. Stewart Kennedy, Incident Manager

Date: January 18, 2021

RE: Physical Distancing Guidelines – Revised for Provincial State of Emergency

The health and safety of all staff, professional staff, patients, Care Partners and the community is our utmost priority. Physical distancing remains a key component to preventing the spread of COVID-19. As such, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and Capital Planning issued on August 13, 2020 Physical Distancing Guidelines for our Hospital. In light of the current Provincial State of Emergency, the Guidelines have been reviewed and temporarily updated.

Please carefully review and adhere to the following for the safety of all.

Masks: NEW

Level 2 (or higher) procedure masks must be worn at all times when in the hospital. The only exceptions are when alone in a private office and when consuming food or beverages in an approved break space while maintaining physical distance of 2 meters.

Public Transactional Desks and Queuing Lines: NO CHANGES

- Routine public check-in areas will be equipped with a physical barrier.
- Back-office areas that have limited public access will not be equipped with a physical barrier.
- Nursing stations will not be equipped with a physical barrier.
- All staff and patrons should be wearing a mask.
- Public areas will be equipped with floor decals for distancing while queuing.

Waiting Rooms: NOTE CHANGES

- Capacity of waiting rooms should be primarily managed by scheduling to limit wait times.
- Seating in waiting rooms should be occupied to **ensure people are seated 2 meters apart**.
- If capacity becomes constrained, other options must be considered – such waiting in cars, a callback process, etc.
- All occupants of a waiting room shall wear masks, as per Hospital policy.

Administrative Work Areas: NOTE CHANGES

- **An employee in a private office or room does not need to wear a mask.**

Service and Clinical Work Areas: NO CHANGES

- Employees will maintain 2 meter physical distancing as able; and will wear masks.
- Masks will be of the type suitable for the work involved as per Hospital PPE policy.

Patient Care Areas: NO CHANGES

- Staff will wear appropriate PPE.

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- Patients and Care Partners/Essential Care Partners will wear masks as per policy – unless alone in room or alone in an area contained by a barrier (i.e. curtain or divider).

Staff Lounges & Lunchrooms: NOTE CHANGES

- **Furniture and layouts of the spaces must be used and remain as set-up.**
- **Maintain physical distance of 2 meters, unless physical barriers are in place.**
- **Masks do not need to be worn in lunch and breakrooms while eating and if the above criteria are met.**
- Employee breaks and lunchtimes should be staggered as able.
- Employees will maintain 2 meter physical distancing when in the lunchroom eating and unable to wear a mask.
- Cafeteria should be used if department capacity is of concern.
- **Additional meeting room space has been set-up to accommodate overflow.**
- **Individuals with assigned workspace, not in clinical areas, can eat at their workspace.**
- **Communal food is not allowed; if food is provided it is to be in individual servings.**

Meeting Rooms: NOTE CHANGES

- **Only clinical meetings may happen in person.**

Meetings, Walkabouts, Leadership: NEW

- **Technology should be leverage to complete all meetings or interactions virtually (i.e. phone, Webex, etc).**
- **Walkabouts should continue, but should be limited, and with a needs and risk assessment completed prior to executing.**
- **Aside from front-line leaders, additional leadership presence in departments should continue, but be completed virtually as able, or when essential a risk assessment is to be completed prior to executing.**

Training & Education: NEW

- Masks will be worn during training sessions.
- **Sessions of no more than 10 people indoors is allowed during the Provincial State of Emergency.**

Elevators: NO CHANGES

- Regular elevator occupancy will be a two person limit and occupants will wear masks. exceptions are possible if proper PPE is worn (signage is posted).
- Trauma elevator will be used based on clinical needs and capacity – with occupants wearing appropriate PPE.

Change Rooms and Bathrooms: NOTE CHANGES

- Occupants of multi-use bathrooms **will wear masks** and will maintain physical distancing and limit occupancy to two persons per bathroom (signage is posted).
- In change rooms, staff will **wear masks and limit occupancy** to maintain physical distancing (education signage will be posted if not already in place).

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Hallways, Stairwells and Public Spaces: **NOTE CHANGES**

- Will remain 'two-way' as per status quo.
- **Masks will be worn at all times.**
- **Masks should also be worn when outside and unable to maintain 2 meters of physical distance.**

Clinical managers should ensure scheduling processes are leveraged to ensure physical distancing can be optimized.

Other physical distancing solutions such as virtual visitation, call-back, or alternates will also be considered on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to safety.

For questions or concerns, please contact John Ross or Anne-Marie Heron.

All Hospital COVID-19 updates are also available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.