

Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Policy

Approved By: Council
Approval Date:
Effective Date:
Revision Date:

Policy Statement

This policy is designed to ensure that staff are fully aware of infection control precautions and procedures.

Purpose: This policy is designed to ensure that staff are fully aware of routine infection control precautions and procedures in the workplace. The aim is to clearly identify requirements and procedures essential to control the spread of infection at the workplace while also maintaining municipal operations. This policy is based on information available at the time of its development and is subject to change based on further information provided by government, local public health authorities and the latest evidence. This policy also confirms the authority of management to enforce these control precautions.

Application: This policy applies to all staff of the Township of Douro-Dummer whether full-time, part-time or contract and will serve as a guideline, informed by public health best practices and government requirements, to help staff remain or return to work under safe conditions.

Declared Emergency – Infectious Diseases

A State of Emergency can be declared at various levels of government and allows the government extraordinary powers with the goal of quickly and appropriately reacting to the emergency at hand. If an Infectious Disease State of Emergency is declared, the Township of Douro-Dummer will adhere to any restrictions and regulations implemented by various levels of government to ensure the safety of all employees. To help mitigate the potential impact of a disease outbreak on our employees and on the population at large, the Township of Douro-Dummer will strictly adhere to all public health advice and related restrictions. The Township recognizes that the individual health practices of employees can have a significant impact on the organization and wider

community, just as organizational practices may impact the health of staff and the community.

Definitions:

Communicable Disease - a disease that is spread from one person to another through a variety of ways that include, but are not limited to, contact with blood and bodily fluids, inhalation of an airborne pathogen or insect bite.

Epidemic - When an infectious or communicable disease spreads rapidly and affects many people.

Outbreak - A higher-than-expected occurrence of a particular infectious or communicable illness, within a specific geographic area.

Pandemic - An epidemic of disease that has spread across a large region, for example across multiple countries or international borders, and affecting a large number of people.

Screening - Screening is a process for surveilling and identifying probable cases of an infectious disease to help guide response actions. Active screening involves tests, examinations and interviewing. Passive screening involves posting signage and messaging.

References & Related Policies:

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Township of Douro-Dummer Health and Safety Policy
Occupational Health and Safety Act
Township of Douro-Dummer Disciplinary Policy
Township of Douro-Dummer Policy P4 Code of Conduct for CBO
Township of Douro-Dummer Return to Work Policy
Township of Douro-Dummer Business Continuity Plan

Consequences of Non-Compliance:

This policy is intended to serve as a guideline, informed by local public health authority best practices and government requirements, to help staff remain or return to work under safe conditions. Non-compliance may put a staff member or multiple staff members in unsafe situations which could result in the spread of communicable disease. Provisions of the Township disciplinary policy may be utilized depending on the severity of the situation.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed on an as needed basis or every 2 years, whichever comes first.

Procedures

The following shall be adhered to in order to implement this policy:

Personal Responsibility:

All employees are expected to reduce or prevent the spread of communicable disease in the workplace by engaging in the following actions to protect themselves, co-workers and the public.

- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with your elbow. If using a tissue, immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash hands thoroughly. Use a hand sanitizer that is appropriate for the situation if soap and water are not available;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:
 - Immediately after using the restroom
 - Before and after you eat
 - Immediately after coughing, sneezing, using a tissue or smoking
 - At regular intervals throughout the day; and
- Use a hand sanitizer that is appropriate for the situation if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid close contact with others and maintain physical distance as recommended by local public health authority.

Employer

Employers must take every reasonable precaution necessary to protect the health and safety of workers. Duties of the employer are stated in Section 25 of the Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA). What is appropriate and reasonable depends on the nature of the organization and the workforce, including:

- Staying informed on current and potential disease outbreaks that may affect the community and/or the workplace and communicate this information to employees as required;
- Conducting regular risk assessments to remain aware of potential hazards and prioritize and minimize risk in accordance with public health advice and regulations;

- Implementing a system for screening and notifying the appropriate workplace parties and public health authorities in case of a positive diagnosis;
- Enforcing the contents of this policy at all times with all members of staff up to and including sending staff home who are exhibiting symptoms which pose a potential risk to the workplace;
- Providing education and training to all employees regarding specific safety protocols and measures;
- Providing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and training;
- Encouraging good hygiene, like hand washing and enhancing environmental cleaning and disinfection;
- Posting hygiene instructions throughout the workplace for staff and visitors in majority workplace languages so everyone understands how to do their part;
- Providing all employees access to proper handwashing amenities and placing hand-sanitizer stations at regular intervals throughout the workplace;
- Regular and thorough sanitation of work surfaces including doorknobs, hand railings, tables, eating areas, shared spaces, shared equipment and other commonly touched surface areas;
- Monitoring cleaning, hygiene and PPE supplies and ensure they are filled regularly;
- Providing individually assigned work materials wherever possible (e.g. pens, keyboards, hand tools etc.) and encourage the use of technology to reduce physical meetings or handling paperwork where possible;
- Implementing controls to allow for appropriate physical distancing requirements;
- Using barriers to protect employees and public where distancing is not possible;

- Supporting physical distancing with a variety of strategies which may include separating workstations, staggering shifts or breaks, holding meetings outside, restricting the number of people on-site, controlling movement through the workplace with signage and floor markings and modifying or eliminating areas where people may gather;
- Adding floor markings and barriers to manage traffic flow and encourage physical distancing;
- Considering ways to introduce more fresh air such as increasing the ventilation system's air intake or opening doors and windows. Avoid central recirculation where possible;
- Ensuring that scheduling information is accurate so that it can be report which employees may have had contact with a positive infection case, should the situation arise;
- Administering policies and responding to crisis in a non-discriminatory manner; and
- Having a business continuity plan.

Supervisor

Supervisors will be held accountable for the health and safety of workers under their supervision. Duties of the supervisor are stated in Section 27 of the OHSA. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all infection prevention and control protocols are being followed and workers are complying with and following established safe work procedures. Some responsibilities include the following:

- Ensuring workers are adhering to measures and procedures as required;
- Ensuring workers use equipment and protective devices and clothing as required; and
- Advise worker of any existing or potential risks of exposure.

Employee/Worker

Every employee will protect his or her own health and safety by working in compliance with the law and with safe work practices and procedures established by the Municipality. Duties of the employee are stated in Section 28 of the OHSA. Some responsibilities include:

- Familiarizing themselves with the symptoms of the infectious disease and self-monitoring;

- Informing their supervisor and any necessary agencies if they develop symptoms and stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of the disease (depending on the situation, this may require a doctor's note). Seek medical attention if symptoms have progressed beyond a state that can be managed with self-care at home;
- Following safe working procedures and properly using appropriate face coverings and/or PPE such as masks and/or gloves;
- Appropriately disposing of used disposable face coverings, masks and gloves in the garbage;
- Practicing good hygiene protocols including frequent hand washing, using appropriate respiratory etiquette, not touching the face with unwashed hands, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and covering your mouth and nose with your elbow when you cough or sneeze; and
- Using sanitizer to completely cover hands when soap and water are not available or practical.

Joint Health and Safety Committee

The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) will run as per the requirements stated in Section 9 of the OHSA. At the time of the creation of this policy, the Township of Douro-Dummer is not required to have a Joint Health and Safety Committee. In the absence of a JHSC, there are Health and Safety Representatives available.

Absence Due to a Communicable Disease

The Township of Douro-Dummer encourages employees to stay home from work if they develop a contagious illness. In some instances, a note from a certified medical professional may be required (this will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis). In some instances, employees may be able to work from home, at the discretion of management. Employees are encouraged to review the organization's sick leave policy and work from home procedure document for additional detail on time off due to illness. Please be aware that employees who report to work but who exhibit symptoms which may pose a risk to their co-workers or the public will be sent home to fully recover before returning to work. In accordance with the Municipality's Return to Work Policy, employees must also complete a Return to Work Survey (Appendix A) before returning to work.

Closure due to a Pandemic

In very rare instances, certain businesses or organizations may be asked to participate in a temporary shut-down in order to help mitigate the spread of a

disease. In this situation, the Township of Douro-Dummer reserves the right to temporarily lay off employees with minimal notice to comply with these requirements. If practical, working from home may be considered depending on the job functions in question. The Township of Douro-Dummer cannot guarantee any employee that working remotely will be feasible but will consider such an arrangement on a case-by-case basis. If it is necessary for the Township of Douro-Dummer office to close temporarily, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will communicate this to employees and the public as soon as possible. The Township of Douro-Dummer will provide staff with regular updates related to the closure. It is expected that all staff who are recalled to work following a re-opening will return to their position within three (3) days of being given notice by the CAO that the workplace has been deemed safe to re-open.

Occupational Illness Reporting Procedures

Workers experiencing symptoms of an infectious disease while at work should immediately inform their supervisor. Employees will be sent home, advised to self-isolate and call their primary care provider or Telehealth for further guidance. The employer has a duty to report confirmed cases to:

- The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in writing within four days
- Health and Safety Representative
- Local Public Health Authority

The Municipality will also report occupationally acquired infections to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) within 72 hours of receiving notice of the illness. The employer should consult with the local public health to determine when a worker is safe to return to work. Clear instructions should be provided to all workplace parties about the reporting procedure.

Infection Prevention and Control Procedures

An effective infection prevention and control program should include the following to reduce workplace exposures to an infectious disease:

- Screening procedures
- Training and communication
- Control measures (including environmental and source control)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Best practice documents published by Public Health Ontario, the local Public Health Authority as well as guidelines and directives from the Ministry of Health will be referenced. Continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of the controls is necessary to ensure the ongoing protection of employee's health and safety.

Business Continuity and Recovery

The Municipality has a Business Continuity Plan and will endeavour to ensure it is updated in a timely manner. Instruction and delineation of roles and responsibilities must be clear. A system for communicating these plans must be made to inform all appropriate workplace parties. Employers must work in accordance with governing bodies and public health authorities regarding business operations during and following a pandemic. The need for preparedness and coordination is fundamental. A phased-in and methodical approach is required for a safe return to the workplace.

Evaluation

It is in the best interest of all parties to consider infection prevention and control in every activity. Commitment to health and safety must form an integral part of this organization, from the employer to the employees. Sector specific guidelines from the Ministry of Labour will be referenced and incorporated into guidelines produced by the Township.

Appendix A: Return to Work Survey – Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Policy

The questions on this survey may change depending on the communicable disease and the regulations, requirements and guidelines set out by various levels of government and the local public health authority.

Appendix – A

**Township of Douro-Dummer Return to Work Survey – Infectious
Disease Preparedness and Response Policy**

The following survey is to be completed to adequately ensure the health and safety of staff and to provide critical information that facilitates the safe transition back to a shared workplace. This survey must be returned to your supervisor or another member of the management team within 24-hours of your scheduled return to work. A return to work will not be accommodated without a completed Return to Work survey.

Thank you for your cooperation and vigilance.

Please provide brief answers to the following questions:

1. Are you exhibiting any symptoms of an infectious disease?
2. Have you been in close contact with anyone who has exhibited symptoms of an infectious disease?
3. Have you travelled to an area where there was an infectious disease outbreak?
4. Have you been in close contact with anyone who recently travelled to an area with an outbreak?
5. Have you left the province within the past 14 days? If so, have you completed a prescribed 14-day period of self-isolation or quarantine?
6. Is there any other information you believe we should consider before your return to work?

I, _____, certify the above to be true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date