EMPLOYEE REORIENTATION
TO THE WORKPLACE
June 3, 2021

Edmonton

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Mandatory public health measures are still in effect across Alberta.

For the most up to date information, refer to the Employee Guide or visit the COVID-19 onecity page.

Note: Bookmark a link to this document. Do not download a copy. The link will always take you to the most current version of this document.

Employee Reorientation to the Workplace

Introduction

In response to the control measures required to create a safe workplace for City of Edmonton employees, your workplace has changed. The following information is meant to reintroduce you to your workplace and inform you on the changes that have taken place and how to navigate them.

This information is meant for all City of Edmonton employees working in a variety of types of workplaces, including public spaces or at home. It also includes details on the Workplace Reintegration Plan which, rather than directing the return to the workplace, outlines how to do so safely, should an appropriate business need arise.

Guiding Principles

This is grounded in our Safe Cultural Commitment — we value, respect and protect the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of each other and those we serve. Additionally, we will:
- prioritize the health, safety and wellness of our employees first. The cornerstone of our operations is our employees — beginning with the Employee Experience.
- ensure needs are in alignment with the Government of Alberta's reopening efforts and Provincial Health Guidelines.
- maintain a re-exit plan and readiness for a sustained pandemic response.
- implement these measures and continue to manage the risks related to the COVID-19 outbreak based on the hierarchy of controls.

Hierarchy of Controls

Our guidelines align with Alberta Health orders and guidance and follow the control methods below:
- Engineering Controls
  - Isolate people from hazards and place barriers or partitions between them.
- Administrative Controls
  - change the way people work or act, including changes in policy or procedures to reduce or minimize hazard exposure, such as limiting the size of gatherings or hours of operations.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Use equipment to minimize exposure to hazards -- for example, using masks or gloves when unable to physically distance

Note: When a hazard cannot be controlled by a single method such as an engineering control, a combination of controls should be used to achieve an acceptable level of safety.

Workplace Reintegration Plan

Occupancy of City buildings is based on the implementation of safety protocols and processes to ensure safety of employees and the public as outlined in the COVID-19 Workplace Inspection Procedure for Leaders, including governance and monitoring of compliance/adherence to safety measures and controls.

Who is Returning to the Workplace

At this time, employees who are able to work from home are encouraged to continue to do so. The decision to return employees to the workplace must be tied to a business need.

For Phase 1, the decision-making factors to be considered when determining if employees return to their workplace include:
- focus is to be on tasks that are required to be completed from the work site (eg. the work requires access to software on site)
- mental health and wellness (wanting to return to the office)

Business areas are responsible for reviewing the factors above and communicating their reintegration plan to their employees.

For Phase 2 and beyond, the following decision-making factors are to be considered when determining if employees return to their workplace:
- job function requirements
- business/customer needs
- mental health and wellness (wanting to return to the office)

Business area leadership will determine who within their workforce will continue to work from home under the Temporary Work From Home Arrangement and who will return to the workplace and will communicate their reintegration plan to their employees.

PHASE 1 - Paused - All employees who can work from home under the City's [Temporary Work From Home Arrangement](#) MUST continue to do so under the work from home public health order.	
BUILDING TYPE	**DESCRIPTION OF OCCUPANCY**
Occupied / Relaunched Buildings that have continued to be occupied throughout the pandemic to support essential services or have relaunched as approved by ELT. **Low-Rise** Buildings of four or fewer floors where an elevator is generally not essential and which is generally made up of office spaces.	Continued occupancy of building and/or reintegration of staff to an Occupancy threshold of 33%. Leaders must review their business needs for anyone who is attending the workplace - the focus should be on necessary tasks that need to be completed from the work site and mental health and wellness considerations.
High-Rise Buildings of four or more floors where an elevator is necessary for the majority of staff. These include Century Place, Chancery Hall, Edmonton Tower, Scotia Place and MNP Tower.	Occupancy threshold of up to 10% per floor with implementation of safety protocols and processes to safely occupy City buildings, as outlined in the COVID-19 Workplace Inspection Procedure for Leaders, including governance and monitoring of compliance/adherence to safety measures and controls for shared spaces. Leaders must review their business needs for anyone who is attending the workplace - the focus should be on necessary tasks that need to be completed from the work site and mental health and wellness considerations.
PHASE 2 - If Alberta's Open for Summer plan adheres to estimated timelines, this phase will be launched July 5, 2021	
BUILDING TYPE	**DESCRIPTION OF OCCUPANCY**
All Types of Buildings	Occupancy threshold of up to 33% with: Implementation of safety protocols and processes to safely occupy City buildings as outlined in the COVID-19 Workplace Inspection Procedure for Leaders, including governance and monitoring of compliance/adherence to safety for shared spaces and workspaces.
NOTE: higher occupancy in some buildings has been approved, and will continue to be, when hazard assessments and inspections confirm that effective controls allow for greater capacity and an appropriate business need has been identified with approval from the Deputy City Manager (DCM). New requests require approval of the business area DCM.	
PHASE 3 - Reintegration to workplaces in line with the vision of flexible work spaces and the remote work program. More information will be provided in late June.	

COVID-19 Control Measures

COVID-19 Pre-Shift Screening Checklist

It is important to reduce the risk of an employee coming to work that may have COVID-19. The self-screening checklist is a quick and convenient way for you to screen for any symptoms of COVID-19 prior to your shift.

All employees working at City of Edmonton or other work sites are required to complete a pre-shift screening prior to starting their shift. Before leaving for work, you complete the COVID-19 Pre-Shift Screening Checklist (printable version) at home to determine if you are fit for work. More information is available in the toolbox talk. Employees who are working from home are not required to complete the checklist unless they are reporting for work outside of the home, but they are encouraged to monitor themselves for symptoms.

Physical Distancing in the Workplace

Follow the physical distancing measures put in place in your workplace. Signs and floor stickers may have been placed to help navigate common areas including lobbies, hallways, cafes, washrooms, stairwells and elevators. Employees may help to identify other outdated posters and signage in their work area that need to be removed if it is a distraction to physical distancing signage.

Where directional signage is not installed, employees are asked to allow for 2 metres of physical distance between others and follow signage when lining up, if installed. Be respectful of each other's space. As general guidance: if in doubt, stay to the right. Wearing face coverings does not remove the need for physical distancing.

Mandatory Mask Requirements

Masks are mandatory at all times in all indoor public places, subject only to limited exceptions. The limited exceptions applicable to employees in City facilities include:
- The person is alone at a workstation and separated by at least 2 metres distance from all others;
- The person is separated from every other person by a physical barrier that prevents droplet transmission;
- The person is consuming food or drink [they must be 2 metres away from others];
- The person is unable to wear a face mask due to a mental or physical health concern or limitation [this must be confirmed with Disability Management]; or

- A hazard assessment determined the person's safety will be at risk if they wear a mask while working; The requirement to wear a face mask applies to all employees, visitors, delivery personnel and contractors; and it applies to all locations where workers are present. All persons should expect to wear a mask at all times, except during limited times when an exception applies. Compliance with these laws is a workplace requirement.

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Impacts of the mask rules include:
- Masks are required for in-person meetings and training classrooms, even where physically distanced from others in the room. Online meetings or training should be preferred wherever possible.
- Workers in cubicles, work bays or designated marked spaces may work without a mask while in the cubicle, work bay or space, provided they are at least 2 metres apart from other workers at all times, and provided no other person will enter that cubicle, bay or space at any time.
  - The furthest edges of the cubicle, bay or marked space must be at least 2 metres apart from the edges of another cubicle, bay or space for this exception to apply.
  - Alternatively, if the cubicle, bay or space is separated by high walls or dividers made of solid materials that prevent droplet transmission (e.g. plastic, plexiglass, metal, wood), an exception may apply.
  - If another person enters the space, both persons must wear masks.

The application of task based exceptions will be determined by supervision in consultation with their Workforce Safety and Employee Health partners. If in doubt, a mask should be worn and a supervisor consulted to ensure appropriate safety measures are established.

Should an employee have a reason they are not able to wear a face covering, they are required to notify their supervisor or Disability Management Consultant to discuss an appropriate accommodation.

Review the PPE selection guide in the [Face Mask Quick Reference Guide](#) for minimum mask requirements. Masks will be distributed by supervisors. Supervisors, or designated personnel, will be required to work with their Corporate Procurement designate to order and maintain an adequate supply of masks ([Critical Supplies Process](#)). Employees are permitted to wear and use

personal reusable cloth face coverings. On a one time basis, the City will provide two reusable face masks to each City of Edmonton employee, if they want them. To request the reusable face masks, employees should contact their supervisor who can order them through the Critical Supplies process mentioned above.

Workstation Cleaning and Disinfecting

It's everyone's responsibility to maintain a clean and sanitary workplace. In preparation for increased occupancy, we will increase the cleaning of routinely touched surfaces such as tabletops, door handles, common seating areas, bathroom fixtures, boardroom phones and keyboards. Following Alberta Health guidelines, we will reduce non-essential cleaning such as dry garbage removal and vacuuming in some areas to increase cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.

If the necessary disinfectant cleaning supplies are not available in your work area, please speak with your supervisor.

Follow these three easy steps on your personal workspace when required, and prior to using a shared workspace:

1. Use a disinfectant solution sprayed on a paper towel or disposable disinfectant cloth to wipe down hard surfaces. These include:
    - Keyboard
    - Mouse
    - Phone
    - Desktop
    - Chair armrests
    - Door handles
    - Cabinet door/drawers
    - Table tops

    It is important to understand how to disinfect a surface. Each product requires certain amounts of time to be effective. Ensure that you read and follow the instructions on the product labels.

2. Carefully dispose of the sanitization materials immediately after use.

3. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using products.

Business Areas are responsible to ensure they have an appropriate amount of cleaning and disinfecting supplies available for their staff at all times. Additional supplies are available through CPSS.

In addition to proactive, regular cleaning and disinfection, workplaces must be prepared for a rapid response if an employee develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at work. In this case, the Rapid Response procedures must be followed immediately. Information can be found in the Supervisor Toolkit for Pre-Shift Screening and Rapid Response.

Meetings

Due to physical distancing considerations, capacities of meeting rooms have been lowered. Revised occupancy limits of conference/meeting/training rooms will be posted on meeting room doors. However, Google Calendar listed room capacity will not be adjusted, so capacity should be considered around 25% of that listed.

Continue to use Google Meets as much as possible to reduce face-to-face meetings and accommodate any employees who remain working remotely.

If meetings are to occur in person, they should be as brief as possible, and ensure physical distancing is in place. Masks must be worn in meeting rooms, regardless if participants are physically distanced.

Meeting rooms that are used will be disinfected on a daily basis per standard cleaning procedures. Disinfectant products will be left in each meeting room for employee use. Users are recommended to disinfect before and after using any high-touch surfaces including: door handles, tabletops, arm rests and computer mouse/keyboard. Be sure to wash your hands afterwards. If appropriate disinfectant products are not found in a meeting room, please inform your supervisor.

Escalators, Elevators and Stairwells

For escalators, allow six stairs between you and the next person. Use designated line-up areas to ensure adequate separation.

Elevators will be limited in occupancy to one to four people depending on the size of the elevator. Signage will be installed accordingly and users are asked to face the wall, when it is comfortable to do so. Use designated line-up areas to ensure adequate separation.

Employees are encouraged to use the stairs, to ensure that elevators remain accessible to people who are unable to use the stairs.

Workstations (Cubicles, Offices)

Where available, follow the instructions and only use designated workstations. Where there is no specific signage employees should:
- Use workstations that are two metres away from other occupied workstations; or
- Use a closed space (office, meeting room, Now room), respecting the occupancy limit for that room.

Washrooms, Locker Rooms, Change Rooms and Showers

Due to the typical size of washrooms, change rooms and showers, it is challenging to maintain the required two-metre distance from other users. If these are occupied by more people than can accommodate the two-metre separation, please wait to enter until other users have left. Use a combination of verbal and hand cues when entering or exiting a washroom, change room and/or shower to communicate your presence.

While in a washroom, change room or shower, continue to maintain distance by using every second stall or shower and every third urinal, sink or locker. Routine hand washing is the first line of defence against COVID-19. Drying your hands well is equally important in minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

Kitchens/Dining Areas

If these are occupied by more people than can accommodate two-metre physical distancing, please do not enter. Wait until other users have exited the space. Follow the signs posted in your kitchen area on maximum occupancy, circulation and use of sitting areas. Kitchens and their appliances are to remain open and accessible to staff to minimize the need for staff to enter public spaces to get coffee, food, etc.

Some changes to these areas include:
- Communal meals should not be provided nor should food be made available in common areas where employees may congregate. Communal condiments must be removed.
- Employees are encouraged to bring and store their own utensils, napkins, condiments and other consumable supplies to limit the possibility of transmission through high touch surfaces in the kitchen, however utensils and other kitchen flatware should still remain available to employees.
- Kitchen appliances (fridge, kettle, microwave, coffee machines, drinking fountains, etc.) must be wiped down after use.
- The 'Sanitize' setting on the dishwasher must be used. If this setting is not available, use the highest temperature setting. Ensure you wash your hands before unloading the dishwasher.

Kitchen areas should be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis at minimum by custodial services. High-touch surfaces should be cleaned by each user and appliances and surfaces disinfected before and after each use.

Print/Copy Rooms

Due to the size of print/copy and mail rooms, it can be challenging to maintain the required two-metre distance from other users. If these rooms are occupied by more people than can accommodate physical distancing, please do not enter until others have left.

Users should disinfect all high-touch surfaces before using them. This includes but is not limited to: keypads, paper, staplers, hole punches, supply cabinets. Wash hands after disinfecting. When corporate access cards are used to unlock copiers, consider sanitizing these as well. Include print/copy rooms in daily cleaning routines.

Fire Safety and Evacuations

While maintaining physical distance and wearing a face covering are encouraged during an emergency evacuation, the priority is to minimize the time it takes to fully evacuate the building.
- Follow the instructions of the Emergency Response Plan for your building and those being provided during an emergency evacuation, including information for people with mobility issues.
- Due to limited occupancy, there may not be a fire warden in your area at all times. It is important that you familiarize yourself with the Emergency Response Plan for your facility and know how to respond in case of emergency. ERPs can be found on Onecity or posted on the health and safety board at your facility.
- Once you have safely left the building, follow the physical distancing guidelines at the muster point if possible, put on a face covering if you have it and wash or disinfect your hands as soon as possible.

Regular fire drills are part of the safety measures of our facility. For that reason, drills will continue to take place. Parties responsible for organizing fire drills are encouraged to consider the following when planning such events:
- Conduct organized, pre-planned fire drills where occupants are aware that the emergency is being simulated. Physical distancing **can and should** be followed during planned drills. Participants are expected to wear face coverings.

- Conduct drills off peak hours to ensure minimal occupancy of the building. The drill is most critical for the fire warden and parties involved in managing the evacuation and could be limited to these stakeholders.
- For high-rise buildings, any planned fire drill should include a reintegration plan to manage any gathering in the lobbies, elevators and stairwells.
- Provide for physical distancing once the occupants are safely evacuated from the building, as well as potential distribution of hand sanitizer at the muster point or shelter in place location.

Working Through Concerns With Respect, Empathy & Inclusivity

Returning to the workplace after working from home for a long period of time can be stressful. For some, the level of uncertainty and change has been a great challenge. Others will welcome the chance to return to the workplace. Be mindful of different perspectives on the reorientation to the workplace and consider the tips below.

Plan to connect

Plan an opportunity to connect virtually with one another about returning to work. Discuss the comfort level each of you has with physical distancing, personal hygiene, and other topics. Don't make assumptions that your colleagues have similar needs, requirements or concerns as you. Talk to each other about these issues and respect each individual's perspective.

Assume positive interactions

Start by assuming your colleague has good intentions. Because you have not been working alongside one another, it sometimes can be easy to misread or misinterpret what others are trying to say or how they are acting.

Support your teammates mental health

Returning to work may be very stressful for some employees. Child care, family health, and financial concerns have affected a great number of people. Others may be very excited and enthusiastic about returning to work. Be empathetic and supportive with each other as we return to work and be respectful of the diversity of issues that people might be facing. Likewise, some employees may face extra stresses when working from home and should be supported through this time.

Communicate

Be open and honest in your two-way communication. Be aware that some people may need extra time or support to get back into their routines. If you are struggling or are feeling overwhelmed, communicate that to your colleagues, supervisors, or other supports for assistance. Don't face these challenges alone.

Speak calmly and respectfully

If emotions start running high, we can say things that are mean and hurtful. When we lash out, it is because we are perceiving a threat and our body is responding with a fight or flight response. You have the ability to re-engage the reasoning part of your brain by asking yourself a question such as "What am I really angry about?", "Am I *reacting* or *responding*?", "What story am I telling myself about this situation?", or "What might be happening for the other person?".

Additional Resources for Working Through Concerns With Respect, Empathy & Inclusivity:

Giving & Receiving Feedback in the Workplace
Unconscious Bias at Work — Making the Unconscious Conscious
Return to the Workplace: A psychological toolkit for heading back to work

Information for Supervisors

Communicating with staff who are returning to the workplace

Coming back to the workplace after working from home can be filled with excitement, anxiety or maybe even fear. Two-way communication with staff is crucial to ensure staff are aware of any requirements and able to share any concerns they may have with returning. Supervisors are encouraged to review individual situations and work with the employee to arrive at a mutually acceptable strategy for returning to the workplace where needed. Factor in such things as dependent care needs, transportation to and from the workplace, work requirements and hours of work.

Here are a few ways you can help your staff reorient themselves to the workplace.

Help them feel safe
- Create opportunities to talk about anxiety and fears of coming back to the workplace.
- Identify how the team can work together to keep one another safe and healthy while maintaining physical distancing. This may include continuing to meet virtually rather than in-person.

- Create awareness of the extra precautions that are being taken to keep your team safe, including fit for work screening, cleaning and disinfecting, use of common areas and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (where applicable).
- Provide your whole team (both in-office and remote staff) with regular updates and communications on COVID-19 related matters.
- Encourage staff to respectfully ask others for personal space if someone is too close.

Help rebuild connections
- Take time to rebuild your work relationships.
- Try not to make assumptions as to how your employees feel. Ask questions such as "How are you feeling about returning to work?" or "How can I best support you?" and recognize that this may change for an individual over time. Continue being curious.
- Set up regular check-ins with individuals and the team. This can continue to happen through online platforms where physical distancing can be maintained or in spaces that can accommodate physical distancing.

Communicate safety protocols and expectations
It will be important for leaders to provide information to staff on safety protocols and responsibilities upon return. It is recommended that leaders communicate to staff any unique requirements regarding their site including:
- Use of common or shared areas (if certain areas are closed or restricted).
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment and where it can be obtained.
- Particular cleaning protocols.
- Where cleaning products can be obtained.
- How to raise concerns with safety protocols, as needed.

Reorientation Ambassadors

To assist with the reorientation of employees back into City workspaces and navigate any changes to remote work practices, we will use a network of change champions called the Reorientation Ambassadors.

What Reorientation Ambassadors Are

- A network of engaged employees from various levels and roles who act as champions and subject matter experts on the integration of flexible work spaces and remote work practices.
- A support network to provide information to their work areas, and support adoption of the new practices.

- A feedback mechanism to gather questions, concerns and comments about returning to City workspaces

How Reorientation Ambassadors Help

Ambassadors will receive information on any new processes or changes to how we work remotely and operate within City work spaces. They will then share this information with their work areas and act as subject matter experts.

Ambassadors will also provide feedback gathered from employees and work areas on the challenges they may be experiencing, as well as innovative ideas they have as we navigate this new work environment. Feedback gathered by the Ambassadors will help the Modernizing the Workforce Initiative task teams make necessary changes to project deliverables, and help our communications team ensure that messaging to all City employees is relevant and responsive to identified needs.

Reorientation Ambassadors can help support changes to how we work by:

- Sharing information with employees and referring them to workplace reorientation tools and resources available to them, while encouraging change adoption.
- Coordinating and reporting staff questions, concerns, and ideas to the proper City representative when the response or solution is not known.
- Encouraging employees to participate in any engagement or feedback opportunities.
- Helping to eliminate rumors and misinformation.
- Recognizing individuals who demonstrate behaviors consistent with the "new way of working", while role modeling the changing behaviors themselves.
- Educating and reminding employees of physical distancing measures required and the guidelines put in place by AHS and the City of Edmonton.

If you are unsure of who your Reorientation Ambassador is, please contact your leader.