

# COVID-19 Class Order for isolation

October 14, 2021

## **Under what authority did Peel Public Health issue a class order related to the COVID-19 outbreak to require persons to self-isolate?**

On April 1, 2020 Peel Public Health issued a class order under Section 22 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA). The HPPA authorizes the Medical Officer of Health to issue a class order to address the risks presented by the potential spread of COVID-19 to residents of Peel. The revised class order on February 24, 2021 includes an updated definition for close contacts.

## **Why did the Medical Officer of Health issue this class order?**

This class order was issued as a result of the continued increase in the numbers of people contracting COVID-19 in Peel, and experiences in similar cities around the world. The class order strengthens Peel Public Health's ability to reduce the loss of life from COVID-19, and preserve and protect the capacity of our health care system to respond and to provide care for those who need it. It also underscores how important it is for each resident to protect our community and save lives from COVID-19.

While the vast majority of people who have or may have COVID-19, as well as their close contacts, have been compliant with instructions from public health authorities to self-isolate, there are individuals who do not take these measures seriously enough or whose life circumstances make it difficult to comply.

Peel Public Health is available to provide support to those who need assistance. However, this class order is a legal tool to help us ensure that everyone who needs to, complies with the direction to self-isolate.

## **When is the order effective?**

The revised class order is effective from October 14, 2021 and will remain in effect until such time as the Medical Officer of Health determines it is no longer required.

## Who is required to self-isolate under this order?

All persons residing in or present in the Regional Municipality of Peel who:

- a) are identified as a person diagnosed with COVID-19;
- b) have the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the results of their test;
- c) otherwise have reasonable grounds to believe they have symptoms of COVID-19; or
- d) are a close contact of a person identified in (a), (b) or (c); or
- e) are a parent, or person with responsibilities of a parent, of a person under sixteen years of age identified in (a), (b), (c) or (d).

A “**close contact**” means a person who:

- Has had a high-risk exposure to a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 while they were infectious (generally this is 48 hours before the case’s symptoms started or 48 hours after their initial high risk exposure if asymptomatic and until they are cleared from isolation), AND
- Has had direct contact with infectious body fluids of the case (e.g., coughed or sneezed on) OR
- Has had close, prolonged and/or unprotected contact.

In addition, a person is a close contact if they have been identified by Peel Public Health or another public health unit as a close contact of a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Close contacts who are fully vaccinated or previously positive do not need to isolate unless otherwise directed by Peel Public Health.

**Fully vaccinated** means a person has received the last dose of a Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine (second dose of a 2-dose vaccine, or a single dose of a 1-dose vaccine) or any combination of these vaccines at least 14 days ago.

A person is also considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving:

- 1 or 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not approved by Health Canada, followed by 1 dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna) or
- 3 doses of any COVID-19 vaccine not approved by Health Canada.

**Previously positive** means a person had COVID-19 within the past 90 days, they recovered and completed their isolation period from their initial infection.

## How long must people self-isolate?

People with, or suspected of having, COVID-19, are required to self-isolate for 10 days after their symptoms began or from their test date if they have no symptoms. If they have severe illness or severe immune compromise, they must self-isolate for 20 days after their symptoms began or they were tested if they have no symptoms. They can come out of isolation as long as they do not have a fever and their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.

If they have symptoms and test negative and are not a close contact, they must self isolate until:

- they do not have a fever.
- their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.
- their digestive issues, if any, have been resolved for at least 48 hours.

Close contacts are required to self-isolate for 10 days from their last exposure to the person with COVID-19 unless otherwise directed by public health even if they test negative. In certain instances, such as in outbreaks, people may be required to self-isolate for 20 days from their last exposure if they do not get tested.

If they are fully vaccinated or previously positive in the last 90 days and do not have symptoms, they do not need to self-isolate unless otherwise directed by public health.

## Are there any exceptions?

Yes, modifications to the order can be made for the following persons or class of persons:

- A person or class of persons who, in the opinion of the Medical Office of Health is asymptomatic and provides an essential service as defined in Ontario regulation, for the limited purpose of providing that essential service;
- A person receiving essential medical services or treatments, whether or not related to COVID-19; or
- Where a person's isolation, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, would not be in the public interest.

## **What does it mean to self-isolate under the order?**

Individuals who are affected by the order are required to self-isolate.

Self-isolation means not leaving home at all or having any visitors except as permitted by Peel Public Health (for example, where a health care worker is visiting the home). People in self-isolation should arrange to have groceries and other necessities delivered to them. If a person requires assistance with this, they should contact Peel Public Health.

## **Do children need to stay home from school or child care?**

Yes. Children who are affected by the order are required to self-isolate.

In addition, children who are not fully vaccinated or previously positive in the last 90 days must stay home from school or child care if they are living in the same household as a person isolating as a close contact for the entire time of the close contact's self-isolation period. These children must not gather with individuals outside their household who are not fully vaccinated or who are not previously positive in the last 90 days.

## **How do I self-isolate at home?**

Self-isolation requirements include the following:

Residents may not leave their home or isolation facility for any reason during this period of isolation unless:

- They are on a private balcony or in an enclosed yard on their property where they can avoid close contact with others.
- They need to seek emergency medical attention.

These residents must avoid all contact with others including:

- Avoiding all contact with vulnerable persons (for example, those with underlying medical conditions, compromised immune systems, 65 years of age or older, or reliant on homeless shelter/other congregate living setting).
- Avoiding contact with household members as much as possible (for example, wear a mask if you need to be in the same room).

These residents must follow instructions for infection control as directed by Public Health, including direction on handwashing, changing and disposal of masks, not sharing any dishes/cutlery, using a separate washroom if available, sleeping in a room by yourself if possible, and using separate towels.

These residents should seek prompt medical attention if illness worsens.

Please visit the [Region of Peel](#) website for more details on self-isolation.

## **I am required to self-isolate but need support to do so. Who should I contact?**

The Region of Peel is available to assist residents who need help in self-isolating. Individuals who need support can contact Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700. You can also learn more about our [COVID-19 Voluntary Isolation Housing](#) program.

If a person with COVID-19 is homeless, or lives in a home that is unsuitable or unsafe for isolation purposes, they can also learn about [emergency housing during COVID-19](#).

## **Who should I contact if I am concerned that a person who should be self-isolating is not doing so?**

Peel Public Health is responsible for following up on concerns of non-compliance with the order. To report an issue, please call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 or in Caledon at 905-584-2216.

## **What does Peel Public Health do if they receive a report of someone not self-isolating?**

Peel Public Health will receive the information about the individual who is not self-isolating and a public health inspector will follow up with the identified individual as appropriate. The public health inspector will:

- verify whether the person should be in isolation.
- if the person should be in isolation, the inspector will determine why they are not. The public health inspector will work with the individual to identify and address barriers to why they are not complying. This could include working with social or other agencies.
- if required, conduct on-going assessments as to whether the person is complying.

As a last resort, individuals who are required to self-isolate, as identified under this order, and who do not self-isolate can be charged and fined up to \$5,000 per day or confined to a health care facility.

In order to protect the individual's privacy, the outcome of the follow up is private and will not be disclosed to the caller.

## Can a person challenge the order?

Individuals identified in the class may challenge the order by appealing to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board. Visit the [Health Services Appeal and Review Board](#) website for contact information.

## More Information

If you have questions about the class order, please call [Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700](#) or in [Caledon at 905-584-2216](#).

If you require a health care assessment, call your [primary care provider](#) or [Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000](#).