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## **Infection and Disease Control Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to describe the policies and procedures for infection and disease control. This policy must be used in conjunction with all other applicable health and safety regulations and governing legislation.

### **Transmission of Microorganisms**

Employees and visitors of the Township of Southgate (Township) may be exposed to pathogenic microorganisms, bacteria, and other microbes that can cause infection and disease.

Transmission of microorganisms can be caused by contact transmission from hands (direct) or objects (indirect), droplet transmission from coughing or sneezing, or airborne transmission from the inhalation of organisms surviving in air for long periods of time.

Other routes of entry for infection include:

- Injection;
- Inhalation;
- Ingestion;
- Contact with the skin, eyes, or nose.

While it may not be possible for the Township of Southgate to completely eliminate all routes of entry for infections, employees share a responsibility to follow safe work procedures and practices to mitigate the risk of infection.

### **1. Training**

The Township will educate all employees on the information in this document and general infection prevention and control practices. This will include, but is not limited to:

- The risks associated with infectious diseases;
- The importance of appropriate immunizations;
- Hand hygiene;
- Appropriate cleaning and/or disinfection of items;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

### **2. Routine Practices**

Following routine practices help protect both the employees and visitors of the Township of Southgate from pathogens. Consistent practices must be used at all times with all persons as someone could be infected but be asymptomatic.

#### **a. Hand Hygiene**

Hand hygiene is the most important measure in preventing the transmission of microorganisms. Hand hygiene includes both washing the hands with soap and water and using alcohol-based hand rubs.

Township of Southgate's hand hygiene program incorporates the following elements:

- Township provision of adequate hand washing equipment and supplies (water, soap, towels) where reasonable;



- Township provision of alcohol-based hand rub in addition to hand washing facilities or when hand washing is not viable;
- Employee education about hand hygiene; and
- Communication to visitors about hand hygiene measures and requirements.

Employees must follow directives of public health and recognized common standards for hygiene to determine if hands should be washed. Always wash or sanitize your hands if there is potential that they have become contaminated with bodily fluids.

Note: hand washing is preferred and more effective at removing dirt and grime than hand sanitizer; exercise washing over alcohol rub whenever possible.

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

PPE creates a physical barrier that protects an employee's own tissue from exposure to infectious materials and from transmission resulting from contact with others. The type of PPE is dependent on the nature of work being completed. Employees of the Township of Southgate are to wear appropriate PPE when interacting with contacts and/or surfaces that pose the risk of transmitting microorganisms. The Township will consider all other methods of hazard control before relying on PPE alone, however PPE may be the only protection viable in some circumstances.

Common PPE for infection prevention and control include gloves and facial protection.

#### Gloves

- Hand hygiene must be completed immediately before donning and after removing gloves.
- Do not touch outside of the gloves with your hands.
- Do not touch face, eye, nose, mouth when wearing gloves.
- Do not share gloves with another worker.
- Do not place gloves on surfaces that you touch with your hands.
- Gloves should be put on immediately before performing the activity for which they are being used.
- Gloves must be removed and discarded immediately after use.

#### Facial Protection

- A mask can be used in the event that Health Canada recommends it for airborne infectious diseases.
- Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Do not share masks.
- Do not cut holes in the mask for eating/drinking/smoking.

### **c. General Hygiene Etiquette**

All employees shall follow personal practices to help prevent the spread of microorganisms. Visitors will be encouraged likewise. These personal practices include:

- Keep your hands away from your face:
  - Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth – without washing or sanitizing first
  - Be conscious of what you are doing with your hands
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue
  - If you use a tissue, dispose of it immediately and wash or sanitize your hands



- Do not use hankies or reuse tissues

#### **d. Environmental Cleaning and Sanitizing**

Cleaning is the removal of foreign material (e.g. dust, soil, microorganisms, etc.). Cleaning physically removes rather than kills the microorganism and thorough cleaning is required for any equipment/surface to be disinfected, as organic matter may inactivate a disinfectant.

Disinfection is the process used on inanimate objects and surfaces to kill microorganisms. Cleaning and disinfecting agents may be combined into a single product to save a step in the cleaning and disinfecting process.

Maintaining a clean and healthy environment is integral to the safety of employees and visitors and is a top priority at the Township of Southgate. Environmental cleaning and disinfection are performed on a routine and consistent basis to provide a safe and sanitary environment.

Frequently touched surfaces are to be cleaned and disinfected regularly by the person(s) using them. This includes doorknobs, vehicle door handles, light switches, counters, handrails, touch screen surfaces, phones, keyboards, etc.

Please refer to specific protocols for more details on cleaning of specific areas during a pandemic.

When possible, use pre-mixed solutions for cleaning. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use:

- Properly prepare solution
- Allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to kill germs
- PPE requirements
- Ventilation requirements
- Disposal and storage considerations

### **3. Employee Sickness**

Employees who may have contracted a cough/cold, flu, etc. and are in the early stages of infection should not report to work as they may infect others in the Township of Southgate workplace. Employees are required to exercise their judgement and call into their Supervisor prior to their scheduled start time.

Employees should only return to the Township of Southgate workplace when they are no longer symptomatic or are no longer contagious. An employee will use their paid sick days for this time-off and if applicable may qualify for Short Term Disability. Please refer to Personnel Policy #1.

If an employee is suspected to have or has been in contact with a positive case of an infectious disease, they may be required to self-isolate for the amount of days recommended by Public Health. Screening may take place for employees at the discretion of the Township of Southgate.

See the attached protocols for specific infectious diseases.

**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHGATE**

**Policy # 84**

**Infection and Disease Control Policy**

**Approved by Council on: June 17, 2020**



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**4. External Contacts**

External contacts may be screened at the discretion of the Township of Southgate. Both passive and active screening may be used as applicable and relevant. If screening results indicate a potential risk of infection or disease, the contact may be asked to rebook their appointment or may be required to take additional precautions while in contact with Township of Southgate staff.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Ratepayers and citizens
- Delegations to Council
- Delivery personnel
- Service providers and vendors
- Consultants and contractors



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## **Schedule A: Infectious Disease Protocol: COVID-19**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this protocol is to describe the procedures and responsibilities throughout the Township of Southgate if an employee has a suspected positive or confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

### **Use of Protocol**

This protocol is to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic, if any of the considerations listed below are true:

1. Employee has at least one of the following symptoms:
  - Fever
  - New onset cough
  - Difficulty breathing
  
2. Employee has at least two of the following symptoms:
  - Chills
  - Lost sense of taste or smell
  - Sore Throat
  - Difficulty Swallowing
  - Hoarse Voice
  - Headache
  - Runny Nose
  - Fatigue
  - Digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
  - Stuffy or congested nose
  
3. Employee has been in close contact with someone that has been confirmed or suspected to be COVID-19 positive.

### **Process & Responsibilities**

- a. Employee's Responsibilities
  - Report any illness that is suspected to be COVID-19 using the above criteria.
  - If you suspect you have COVID-19 or have been in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19, perform the online assessment and follow the instructions given.
  - Contact a health professional or Telehealth Ontario for guidance.
  - Self-isolate if required.
  - Keep in contact with the Township to communicate your health status and for planning your return to work.
  
- b. Supervisor's Responsibilities
  - If an employee arrives at work sick with any of the above listed conditions, direct him/her to leave the workplace immediately, return home and follow the directions of public health officials or other medical practitioner; advise him/her to perform the online assessment.
  - Advise the Human Resources immediately.
  - Identify locations where the potentially affected worker had recently worked.
  - Thoroughly disinfect the area and all equipment/tools. Consider isolating the area and tools until disinfected.

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c. Human Resources Responsibilities

- Human Resources shall manage each situation accordingly and may seek assistance of external experts.
- Human Resources may advise other workers that may have come into contact with the potentially affected employee, as reasonable to the situation and as dictated by Public Health.
- Keep records of absences due to illness and note any alarming trends or repeated outbreak of infections. In any cases where a pattern is noted, senior management will be notified so that additional infection control procedures can be put into place where necessary.
- Advise worker of any assistance available for workers in self-isolation.
- Notify Public Health.
- Notify Ministry of Labour within four days, of all positive cases in the workplace.
- Notify WSIB if applicable.