

Requirements for Work-Home Isolation for High-Risk Close Contacts of a Person with COVID-19 in Congregate Living Settings (CLS) - January 20, 2022

Toronto Public Health (TPH) continues to revise its guidance as the situation regarding COVID-19 changes. The following is the latest direction from TPH regarding “Work-Home Isolation” for staff identified as a high-risk close contact of a person with COVID-19 who work in Congregate Living Settings and/or provides support to person(s) who are immune compromised. Work-Home Isolation should only be considered in situations to meet a **critical staff shortage**.

Work-Home isolation (WHI) is when we bring an “asymptomatic” employee back to work early, allowing them to carry-out their period of isolation while continuing to work. This is for staff identified as high-risk close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case who have been instructed to self-isolate based on the latest guidance from Ministry of Health dated January 18, 2022. A staff who has tested positive for COVID-19 and remains asymptomatic will only be considered for WHI after completing a minimum of 5 days of isolation at home. Positive staff working in high-risk settings will only be considered for work-home isolation if the location is in outbreak, all staff are identified as positive or previously positive (within 30 days) and all the individuals in the location are positive for COVID-19. Returning staff on work-home isolation must be done in consultation with Occupational Health and/or Toronto Public Health. The employee has to be agreeable and sign-off that they understand the requirements of Work-Home isolation.

Work-Home Isolation

Work-home isolation will be considered in order to stabilize staffing needs in a CLS. This means staff can go **from home to work and back only**. They must be fully vaccinated (preferable having completed three doses) and asymptomatic and must meet the conditions below.

When considering work-home isolation an assessment of risk must be done in consultation with Occupational Health, your manager and/or director. Staff will be returned prior to completing their isolation period at home as long as it is safe to do so.

1. All staff must be actively screened before entering the location. Any staff who is ill or develops COVID-19 symptoms must be removed from the work environment immediately.
2. The employee must complete a daily Rapid Antigen Test for the duration of the work-home isolation period provided there is a sufficient supply of RAT tests. Supervisors must provide test kits to the employee. **Note: positive staff are not required to complete daily Rapid Antigen Test.**
3. The employee must adhere to wearing facial protection including an N95 mask and face shield at all times.
4. Do not take breaks or consume drink/meals in a shared space with other staff. When removing their facial protection the employee must be in a room alone with the door closed.
5. The employee, on work-home isolation, must only work for one employer, in one location.
6. Use transportation for travel to and from work by means other than ride share or public transit -for example, private vehicle or transportation service provided by CLTO. The supervisor will need to arrange transportation for the employee on work-home isolation.
7. The supervisor will explain the requirements for work-home isolation to the employee.
8. The supervisor will update the NOO identifying the employee’s start date of WHI. Follow the instructions outlined in the NOO manual on how to add WHI to an employee’s NOO. Once the NOO is updated, the employee will receive an email outlining the work-home isolation requirements. The employee will acknowledge that they agree to the requirements as outlined above. This will generate an automatic email notification to the supervisor and OHS.
9. All employees on WHI will be tracked through the NOO system.
10. When the isolation period is completed. The supervisor will update the NOO and indicate the WHI period has ended. Entering a date will automatically send a notification to the employee and OHS.