

Date: March 11, 2021

Re: Face Covering Policy Update - Medical Masks

Since May 2020, fabric face coverings have played a key role in our COVID-19 control strategy however as our understanding of the COVID-19 virus has evolved over the past year so too has our control strategy. An upcoming change to the type of face coverings that will be used in our workplaces is being rolled out over the next few weeks.

Effective April 2, all Metrolinx staff including integrated contractors will be required to wear a medical mask in the workplace instead of a fabric face covering. Medical masks are manufactured and tested to an established standard for fluid resistance, breathability, and filtration efficiency and provide droplet splash protection to the wearer. Fabric face coverings are not manufactured or tested to a standard and primarily provide protection to others, whereas medical masks protect both the wearer and others.

For an additional layer of protection, recent research has indicated that the practice of double-masking or wearing a fabric face covering over top of a medical mask, can provide a significant level of filtration and protection from inhaling potentially infectious material. Employees are encouraged to wear a fabric face covering over their medical masks if they can do so, but this practice is not mandatory at this time.

Medical masks will be rolled out starting the week of March 15 and all employees, integrated consultants, and contractors are encouraged to begin using them when received ahead of the April 2 compliance deadline. Medical masks are being issued as an enhanced control measure as Ontario faces a potential third wave of COVID-19 from the spread of more transmissible COVID-19 variants of concern.

The supply of medical masks for front-line business units will be coordinated through our COVID-19 Incident Command Team (ICT) with regular re-supply being provided to these business units moving forward. For non front-line business units, if you require medical masks when attending a workplace, please speak with your people leader who can coordinate delivery through coronavirus@metrolinx.com. People Leaders should monitor their supply of medical masks and re-order as needed.

Attached to this memo is a Q&A document to help answer any questions you may have around this new measure. Further questions may be directed to the coronavirus inbox at: coronavirus@metrolinx.com. Your compliance with this new measure is sincerely appreciated as we continue to provide a lifeline service during the COVID-19 pandemic.