

COVID-19 Practice Guidance



Province-wide restrictions: New COVID-19 measures

November 20, 2020

The College continues to monitor the status of the COVID-19 pandemic closely and takes direction from BC's Provincial Health Officer (PHO), the BC Centre for Disease Control, and the Ministry of Health.

Effective from November 19, 2020 at midnight to December 7, 2020 at midnight, new [orders and restrictions](#) were announced by the PHO, including orders about mask use.

Masks (non-medical) must be worn by everyone in all shared indoor settings and workplaces, unless they are in a screened or private work area.

For OTs working in community based settings, this means that masks must be worn both by OTs and clients, ***including in any treatment rooms***. It is recognized that in some circumstances, individuals are unable to wear masks (a medical note or other similar proof is not required and cannot be demanded). As with all clinical interactions, OTs are reminded to complete a [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) to determine how to proceed safely and ethically.

OTs working in Health Care Facilities are reminded to follow the [Ministry of Health's Policy Communiqué on Mask Use in Health Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and relevant health authority/employer policies and procedures.

Dr. Henry stressed the importance for all workplaces to ensure that their safety plans are up to date and advised that there will be increased inspection of workplaces.

OTs working in community based settings are advised to review COTBC's document titled [Providing in-person community care during COVID-19: Guidance for regulated health-care providers](#). COVID-19 safety plans must be updated and must continue to be followed rigorously, including all screening. Dr. Henry observed that the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in sectors that are following safety protocols is very low.

OTs are also reminded that non-essential travel is now restricted across BC, particularly travel outside one's immediate community. Travel for work purposes is considered essential travel but may entail additional risk. OTs who commute to work, and/or OTs who travel to see clients across regions, between provinces, and amongst communities, are required to be vigilant and to include consideration of travel in their screening discussions with clients.

[COTBC's Code of Ethics](#) states that OTs “act in the client’s best interest and in a manner consistent with the occupational therapist’s professional responsibilities” (p. 5). OTs must diligently and without exception reflect on their actions and recommit to safety procedures and the PHO’s orders. Open, honest discussions are encouraged between OTs and their clients about risks and the layers for infection prevention and control being implemented by both parties.

Some additional resources you may wish to bookmark:

BC Centre for Disease Control – Masks

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

HealthLink BC - Most Recent Alerts

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/public-health-alerts/most-recent-alerts>