

FAQs – Personal Service Settings & COVID-19

Last revised: March 21, 2021

If one of my employees has only one symptom of COVID-19, do they have to be excluded from work?

- Yes. Staff presenting with only one symptom are to be excluded from work and may return when they either receive a negative result (along with being fever free, symptoms improving for at least 24 hours and staff has not been deemed a high risk contact) or an alternative diagnosis (along with being fever free, symptoms improving for at least 24 hours and staff has not been deemed a high risk contact).
- If the staff member does not get tested or receive an alternative diagnosis, they may return to work after isolating for 10 days from symptom onset.

If someone in my staff's household has COVID-19 symptoms, can my staff still come to work?

- No. Staff members may return to work immediately when the symptomatic household member either receives a negative result or an alternative diagnosis.

Does the client have to wear a mask/face covering?

- Yes, customers/clients are to be wearing a mask/face covering for the duration of their appointment for source control.
- For clients who cannot tolerate a mask/face covering, the appointment should be made at the end of the day when there are no other clients on-site.
- Clients should be advised of the use of a mask/face covering when booking their appointment. Masks are not recommended for children under the age of 2.

Do staff have to wear a mask and/or eye protection?

- Yes, staff who are providing personal services **must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) which includes, a medical mask and eye protection** whenever within 2 metres (6 feet) of another individual.
- Masks should be changed when they become damaged, damp, soiled and when staff go on breaks.
- Staff should receive instructions on proper mask use and how to properly put on and take off a mask. Reusable eye protection should be cleaned/disinfected after use.
- Note: a face shield does not replace a mask. Face shields can be used as eye protection, but a mask is still required.
- Standard safety glasses are not considered licensed PPE (only face shields/goggles would be considered PPE). There are some allowances for non-licensed PPE (safety glasses) during COVID-19 if it meets other certifications (e.g. CSA or NIOSH). Please note, should safety glasses be worn they must provide a tight-fitted seal around the eyes. Please ensure they are designated per person and cleaned/disinfected after removed.

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What constitutes a medical mask?

- A medical mask, also called a surgical or procedural mask, is a fluid-resistant, disposable, and loose-fitting device that creates a physical barrier between the mouth and nose of the wearer and the immediate environment. Medical masks should be authorized for use by Health Canada and can be Class I, II, or III. To access medical masks, please see the [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#):

Can prescription glasses be used as eye protection?

- No. Prescription eyeglasses are not appropriate eye protection. Staff that wear glasses should find masks with built-in shields or separate face shields to wear over the mask.

Do staff have to wear gloves?

- Gloves are not a requirement to prevent COVID-19 unless staff are cleaning up body fluids.
- If gloves are worn for other services, they are to be changed and discarded immediately after every client, when a new task occurs on the same client (e.g. from doing a pedicure to waxing), or more often as necessary.
- Hand hygiene must occur before and after use of gloves.

Can N95 masks be used?

- Yes however, N95s are required to be “fit-tested” for the purposes of being able to protect against airborne transmission. Therefore, they will not provide the level of protection as referenced if they are not fitted.

Are staff (e.g. receptionists) who do not provide services required to wear a mask/face covering?

- Yes.

Is the operator required to supply a mask/face covering to clients?

- No. It is up to the operator if they would like to supply (or make available for purchase) clients with masks/face coverings or require that customers/clients bring their own. If homemade masks are made available for purchase to clients, they are not to be laundered and reused by the personal service setting.

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If we're having challenges finding personal protective equipment (PPE) what do we do?

- There is a [Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#) that lists Ontario businesses that provide PPE
- Consider purchasing reusable PPE such as eye protection that can be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Try re-framing your request (i.e. our local medical officer of health is requiring we have surgical masks as personal protective equipment for the protection of the employees within our business).

What are the criteria for defining space for physical distancing?

- Capacity is based on the ability for clients and staff to remain at least 2 metres (6 feet) from one another. To accomplish this, operators may need to render workstations inaccessible, use physical barriers, provide visual cues (e.g. indicating with tape on the floor), and or rearrange the space to ensure adequate space is maintained.

What kind of screening should Personal Service Settings (PSS) do?

- All clients and staff should be passively ([signage](#)) and actively ([questioned](#)) screened for COVID-19 prior to entry. For clients, this should be done when booking their appointment and upon arrival for their appointment to ensure nothing has changed. Staff should also be screened prior to starting each shift. For further guidance on screening procedures, consult the Ministry of Health's website. PSS may wish to adapt the screening tool found on the Ministry of Health's website. Temperature taking is not necessary as part of the screening process.

Can a child be accompanied by an adult for services?

- Yes, a child may be accompanied by an adult if the appointment is for the child. Children should not accompany a parent/guardian to the adult's appointment. All individuals, including a parent/guardian accompanying a child, are to be screened for COVID-19 prior to entry.

Can towels be used?

- Yes. Where towels are normally used, a clean towel is to be provided to each client and laundered after each use using the warmest possible setting and dried thoroughly.

Can a Personal Service Setting provide food/beverage services?

- Food/beverages should not be supplied to clients at this time. Clients should also not bring outside food or beverages into the PSS unless required for a medical condition.

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Can home-based Personal Service Settings operate?

- Establishments providing personal care services can reopen with the proper health and safety protocols in place, including all relevant legislation and guidance.

Are walk-in appointments permitted?

- Consider only taking customers by appointment and have customers book online or by phone only, restricting walk-ins. Walk-in clients should be asked to call from outside the premises to make an appointment and should be screened as per [screening](#) guidance.

Are Personal Service Settings in long-term care homes (LTCH) and/or retirement homes (RH) allowed to reopen?

- LTC and RHs may offer personal services to the residents within the facility if the person offering the service is an employee of the home. Persons that offer personal services and are not employees of the home cannot offer services as per the RHRA. Please refer to the following [link](#) for further direction on operating.

Are operators that work in long-term care or retirement homes allowed to provide services in more than one facility (LTC/RH)?

- If the PSS operators are direct employees of the long-term care home or retirement home, provincial regulations exist under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that would not permit them to work at more than one home.
- There would be no restrictions for PSS operators who are not direct employees regarding multiple work locations, however, they should work with the homes to ensure that all policies and IPAC procedures can be met.

Can a Personal Service Setting have a waiting area for clients?

- Preferably not. Waiting areas should be closed and clients should be advised to wait outside or in their vehicle until called for their appointment. Visual cues (e.g. indicating with tape) may be considered to assist clients with maintaining physical distancing outside. Persons waiting in line or congregating outside must also maintain 2 metres (6 feet) distance from every other person and wear a mask or face covering.
- Magazines, brochures, décor and other unnecessary items should be removed from the premises.

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Is low-level disinfectant (LLD) sufficient to clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces?

- Yes, LLD is sufficient. Disinfectants should be approved by Health Canada (have a DIN or NPN).
- High-touch surfaces should be disinfected twice daily and when visibly soiled. Surfaces that come into contact with clients should be disinfected after each client (e.g. chairs, head and armrests).
- Washroom surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day or as often as necessary.
- Floors should be swept throughout the day, and a wet mop used at the end of the day.
- For more information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment refer to Public Health Ontario's Guide to Infection Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings, 3rd edition.

Should clients perform hand hygiene upon entering the setting?

- Yes, it is recommended that anyone entering the setting performs hand hygiene. Hand hygiene is also to be performed by staff and clients if a mask is touched at any point, after toileting, handling food, etc.
- Hand hygiene should also occur prior to any manicure.

Are barriers required to be in place in between stations (e.g., hair/nail stations) or at reception?

- Barriers are not a requirement. Workstations should be arranged to maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres (6 feet) between client service areas; however, where workstations cannot be rearranged or other areas where there is close contact between staff and clients (e.g., reception), a physical barrier is recommended.

Does the client have to wear a mask/face covering while having their hair cut?

- Yes. A mask/face covering is to be worn by the client for duration of the appointment to reduce the risk of transmission. It is recommended that stylists or barbers work carefully around the mask. If the hairdresser/barber needs to manipulate the mask/face covering (i.e. lift or move the straps), the operator/service provider must perform hand hygiene immediately afterwards and take care not to manipulate the front of the mask.

Are stylists/barbers allowed to shampoo hair?

- Yes, if appropriate PPE is worn by the operator and a facial covering is worn by the client.

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Can hair dryers be used?

- There is limited concrete data on whether this presents a risk of COVID-19 spread; however, blow drying can be done if all staff and clients are masked and if cleaning and disinfection of instruments, equipment and workstation surfaces occurs between each client. For clients who cannot tolerate a mask/face covering, the appointment is to be made at the end of the day when there are no other clients on-site and the stylist is to wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Do scissors, brushes, hair clippers, nail files and other equipment need to be cleaned/disinfected between each client?

- Yes, all equipment should be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use. This is a requirement under s.10 (4) and s.10(5) of the PSS Regulation. For more detailed information on cleaning, disinfecting, and sterilizing, including disinfection strengths and contact times in a PSS, please refer to Public Health Ontario's Guide to Infection, Prevention and Control in Personal Service Settings, 3rd edition.
- No additional frequency or level of reprocessing is needed as reprocessing of instruments and equipment as per the Guide to IPAC in PSS document is sufficient to inactivate COVID-19.

What is the protocol for using hair capes – do they need to be washed between customers?

- A clean cape should be used for each client. Capes should be washed between clients. Where possible a single-use barrier (e.g., towel, paper neck strip) can be used to avoid direct contact between the client's neck and the cape.

Can hairdressers/barbers work on multiple clients at the same time if there are less than 10 people in the facility (e.g., one client waiting for colour to be processed, while another is getting a cut)?

- Yes, provided the number of staff and clients is restricted at one time, a 2 metre (6 foot) distance between staff and clients is maintained, hand hygiene is performed between clients, and there is enough time in between clients to ensure workstations and equipment are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Can nail dryers be used?

- Provided the PSS is screening clients, disinfecting the units between each use, encouraging mask use, and asking clients to perform hand hygiene prior to having any services, nail dryers may still be used.

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What should operators do with the items that clients make choices from (e.g. nail polish bottles, jewellery)?

- Operators should ask clients not to touch any common items and items should be on display behind barriers for clients to select from.
- Client should not handle colour wheels, stencils, ink, jewellery or any other high-touch item.
- Single-use nail polish bottles are not required.

Can a Personal Service Setting have in-person consultations for clients?

- Consultations should be done online if possible, with in-person appointments reserved for the actual service.
- Portfolios, style books, artist tattoo templates should be made available for online/phone consultations as able.

How will staff be protected if a client is not wearing a face covering due to receiving facial services?

- Be advised that services to the face are not allowed in the orange and red zones of the Province of Ontario's [COVID-19 response framework](#).
- SMDHU's recommendation would be to continue with routine screening and wearing a medical mask and eye protection. If an employee is concerned that their employer will not provide a medical mask/eye protection, then this should be communicated to the Ministry of Labour as it is an occupational health and safety issue around PPE.
- If you as the operator are not comfortable with providing services to the face, then you have the choice to not provide the service. SMDHU is not requiring operators to provide services to the face.