

FACT SHEET – COVID-19 CLASS ORDER FOR SELF-ISOLATION

Last revised: June 1, 2021

A class order under Section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act has been issued by Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Medical Officer of Health (MOH) to enforce COVID-19 self-isolation requirements. The order took effect October 6, 2020, was revised on March 1, 2021 and again on May 27, 2021 and remains in effect until the MOH declares it is no longer needed.

What is a COVID-19 class order?

This class order is a legal order that enables Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) to direct people to stay home and self-isolate until they are not contagious. The purpose is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of everyone in Simcoe and Muskoka. While the vast majority of people who have or may have COVID-19, as well as their close contacts, have been compliant with instructions from public health authorities to self-isolate, there are individuals who do not take these measures seriously enough or whose life circumstances make it difficult to follow this order. This class order is a legal tool to help us ensure that everyone who needs to self-isolate complies with that direction.

Who does the class order apply to?

The class order applies to:

- People with symptoms of COVID-19, regardless if they are fully vaccinated¹ and/or regardless if they get tested.
- People who test positive for COVID-19.
- People in recent close contact with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or who tested positive for COVID-19. This includes caregivers and household members.
- Household members of people in recent close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

How long must people self-isolate for?

People who test positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate for 10 days from the day the person's symptoms began (refer to list of symptoms [here](#)). This is because the period of time you are contagious is for most people up to 10 days from the start of symptoms. Sometimes people are asked to stay home longer, depending on their symptoms and if their immune system is affected by medical conditions or medication.

People who are not fully vaccinated and who have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, which generally means being within 2 metres of that infectious person for at least 15 minutes without adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), must self-isolate for 14 days even if they don't have symptoms. This is because the COVID-19 incubation period (the period between exposure to an infection and the appearance of the first symptoms) can be up to 14 days. Adequate PPE is using both a medical mask and protective eyewear. Cloth face coverings are not adequate PPE. People who are fully vaccinated do not need to self-isolate and can return to work, school, errands immediately.

Unless they are fully vaccinated, household members of people who have symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate until the ill person receives a negative COVID-19 test result or receives an alternate diagnosis by a healthcare professional. If the person with symptoms in the household does NOT get tested, everyone else in the household must stay home for:

- 14 days from the last contact with the person with symptoms if the ill person can self-isolate away from the rest of the household; or
- 24 days from start of the ill person's symptom(s) if the ill person CANNOT self-isolate away from the rest of the household.

¹ Fully vaccinated is defined as an individual who is ≥14 days after receiving the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or the first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.

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Can some people be exempted from the class order?

If absolutely necessary someone who is not fully vaccinated and in self-isolation may still be able to go to critical/essential medical appointments, but they should contact the health unit for instructions on how to do so safely.

Some health care workers who are not fully vaccinated and who are close contacts with no symptoms may be permitted to work if the health care facility requires them to ensure critical services are offered. However, they must self-isolate at home when they are not working or travelling to/from work. Exceptions may also be made for people leaving domestic violence. The health unit will review exceptions for each situation.

How does self-isolation work?

Self-isolation means staying at home or in an isolation facility. Do not go outside or have visitors. Avoid close contact with others. Shop online or have someone pick up supplies for you. If you need support with groceries, prescriptions or other services, please call 211 for advice.

Keep as much distance as possible from the people you live with. Use a separate bathroom and bedroom, if you have one. When sharing rooms, open windows for good airflow. See [how to self-isolate](#).

While self-isolating, people must remain reachable for monitoring by public health. This helps SMDHU make sure they are doing what is necessary and to identify if they need support while self-isolating.

What happens if someone does not self-isolate?

A person who is not fully vaccinated and who ignores the class order to self-isolate can be charged and fined up to \$5,000 per day. The [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#) also allows the Medical Officer of Health to go to court and seek additional orders to protect the health of the community.

Can someone legally challenge the class order?

The person listed in the class order can challenge it by appealing to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board: <http://www.hsarb.on.ca/scripts/english/contact.asp>.

What do I need to know about the federal order under the Quarantine Act?

The federal quarantine order applies to all travellers entering Canada, effective March 25, 2020. It requires all travellers to self-quarantine for 14 days regardless of vaccination status. More information is available [here](#).

In some cases, people who must quarantine under the federal order may also be subject to the order issued by SMDHU's Medical Officer of Health (for example, people who are diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also recently returned from travel).

More Information

For a health assessment, call your doctor's office or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000. For more information about the class order, call Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.