

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE <b>POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION MANUAL</b>	REFERENCE NUMBER _____
SECTION <b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	SUBJECT <b>COVID-19 Policy</b>

**1. BACKGROUND**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic virus. Globally, Nationally and Provincially, variants of the virus have circulated, including the current dominance of the Delta variant with increased transmissibility and disease severity compared with previous COVID-19 virus strains.

COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS- CoV-2). It may be characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms. Asymptomatic infection is also possible. The risk of severe disease increases with age, however, is not limited to the elderly and is elevated in those with underlying medical conditions.

Regardless of which SARS-CoV-2 variant is predominating in an area, vaccination, in combination with public health and individual measures, continue to work to reduce disease spread and severe outcomes. In particular, evidence continues to demonstrate that a complete two-dose series of Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccines provides substantial protection. Based on current data only a fraction of fully vaccinated people became infected, with the majority of recent cases and hospitalizations occurring in unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people.

Throughout the pandemic, the Municipality’s actions and decisions have been based on the information provided by Nova Scotia’s Chief Medical Officer of Health and Nova Scotia Public Health, with the goal of reducing the risk of transmission in the workplace and therefore maintaining a safe work environment for all employees. As detailed by the Province, the majority of new infections in Nova Scotia are among the unvaccinated; and children under 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccines.

**2. POLICY INTENT**

As employees of the Municipality, we share the responsibility to protect our co-workers and their families, as well as ourselves and our own families, from the risk of exposure to COVID-19. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the requirements for mandatory masking in the workplace to protect our employees, their families and the general public from the transmission of COVID-19.

**3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

This procedure is aligned with the employer’s general duty under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to take every reasonable precaution to protect its workers (broadly defined) and the responsibility to assess the workplace for risks, including that of COVID-19 transmission. As

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employees, while at work, the Act also states that we take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect the employee's own health and safety and that of other persons at or near the workplace.

This procedure is applied in accordance with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, and Nova Scotia's Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations.

Information collected under this procedure is in compliance with relevant legislation including but not limited to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act.

#### **4. APPLICATION**

##### **Mandatory Masking:**

*The following safety protocols will go into effect September 15<sup>th</sup> for all staff, contractors:*

Starting Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, employees will be required to mask while at work. FULLY VACCINATED employees will be exempted from this requirement upon providing proof of being fully vaccinated. People will be considered fully vaccinated 14 days after their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization or the 1-dose Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

##### **If you wish to provide proof of vaccination in order to be exempted from the masking requirement, employees and/or contractors are to:**

- Provide your form / card provided by the Nova Scotia Health to the CAO or Municipal Clerk any time starting September 10<sup>th</sup>. You are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after your second shot.

This only needs to be done once and no copy will be kept of your vaccination record. The CAO and/or Municipal Clerk will maintain a list of employees who have shown proof of vaccination and this list will be provided to your Department Head and direct supervisor.

##### **Until such time as you provide proof of vaccination, employees and/or contractors are to:**

- Wear a mask in the workplace at all times except when you are alone in your personal workspace and;

For all visitors to Municipal facilities, starting Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, all visitors, residents and clients will be required to mask when visiting a municipal facility, however if anyone who is willing to provide proof of being fully vaccinated is exempt from this requirement. Anyone who is 11 years or younger will not be required to wear a

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mask, provided that they are with an adult who provides proof of being fully vaccinated. If you are unable to wear a mask, or provide proof of vaccination, we ask that you request service delivery in an alternative fashion, including phone, email, or digitally.

### **Mandatory Vaccination**

In accordance with Public Health guidelines, starting 4 October 2021, you need proof of full vaccination to participate in discretionary, recreational and non-essential activities (like dining out, going to a fitness facility or going to a movie, theatre performance, concert or sporting event). This requirement will apply to anyone participating in, or attending (parent, guardian, siblings, caretakers or audience members) any recreational program put on by Municipal staff or their contractors. Proof of vaccination isn't required for children 11 and younger (they can attend activities with a fully vaccinated adult). People will be considered fully vaccinated 14 days after their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization or the 1-dose Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

### **Important Notes:**

Failure to mask as required will result in you being sent home on unpaid leave for the duration of your shift / workday. Contractors and other people entering Municipal buildings will be required to mask unless they provide proof of vaccination. Appropriate signage will be posted.

Participants who fail to comply with the Provincial Vaccine Policy will not be permitted to participate in any recreational programming.

### **Proper Fitting Masks**

There are no provincial requirements for masks, however in accordance with the advice from Nova Scotia Health, a well-fitted, non-medical mask should:

- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- maintain its shape after washing and drying
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustments
- be made of tightly woven material fabric (like cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaps

### **Gathering Limits**

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As gathering limits are being removed by Public Health, we will remove the previous limits on internal and public meeting. You will need to respect the general occupancy limits of the rooms or facilities you are using. Masking is required as applicable as outlined above.

### **Physical Distancing**

As physical distancing requirements are being removed by Public Health, we will remove these requirements as well for work activities.

### **Cleaning**

As a best practice, we will retain our enhanced cleaning schedules.

### **Health and Hygiene**

Employees that are feeling ill or showing symptoms must stay at home and follow the testing requirements outlined by Public Health.

All employees are encouraged to continue with good personal hygiene i.e. regularly washing hands, coughing/sneezing into your elbow, sanitizing your work space and high touch surfaces etc.

### **Subject to Change**

This procedure is subject to change as the COVID-19 virus and its variants develop and as legal requirements might change.

Chief Administrative Officer's Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Notice to Council Members

Of Intent to Consider [7 days minimum]: **September 24, 2021**

Date of Passage of Current Policy: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that this Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Warden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Administrative Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date