

Guidance for workplace identified First Aiders during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

Introduction:

The Government of Ontario has ordered the mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces, effective March 24, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., as a temporary measure. The following interim guidance are recommendations to help reduce the risk of workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in workplaces that are authorized by the Government of Ontario to remain open. These recommendations do not apply to healthcare settings at the University.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can present as an acute respiratory illness in humans. More information on COVID-19 and how to protect yourself can be found in the Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Fact Sheet. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/8d59-Fact-Sheet_Novel-Coronavirus.pdf

Identified First Aider

I. Attending to a responsive person

Assure Medical Aid

Emergency Contacts

- a) Call emergency services at (9) 9-1-1
- b) Notify Campus Police - Emergency:
 - 416-978-2222 (St. George Campus)
 - 905-569-4333 (Mississauga Campus),
 - 416-978-2222 (Scarborough Campus)

Initial Assessment – Pre-screening

- c) Practice physical distancing - keep 2 metres apart from others
- d) Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Avoid close contact with people who are ill

Verbally assess the patient from a distance of 2 metres away.

Assess the scene, and provide the level of care you are comfortable providing while maintaining physical distancing as appropriate

- e) Establish, at the scene, a safe, designated isolation area for the individual to wait at least 2 metres away from you and other passers-by until Campus Police (CP) and EMS arrive. Remember to avoid face to face conversations within 2 metres, stand to the side of the

injured and if required, when assisting with assuring injured is comfortable while waiting for EMS.

- f) Minimize unnecessary exposure to the patient until the patient assessment is completed. If the person is mobile and has only a minor injury that they can self-treat, provide direction and supplies. Place necessary items for first aid at a safe distance for person to obtain, and step back at least 2 metres.

University volunteer identified workplace first aiders are not equipped / prepared with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and training required to attend to persons with symptoms of COVID-19. They may have gloves in their first aid kits, but they do not have other PPE required for Infection Prevention and Control Droplet and Contact Precautions (*surgical/procedure mask, long sleeved gown, gloves and eye protection*).

During this pandemic, follow the usual steps in case of emergency (call 911, notify CP), CP can remain at the scene with the injured until EMS arrive.

During the initial assessment ask the following questions:

COVID-19 Screening Tool, refer to *Appendix A: UofT COVID-19 Building Entrance Screening Poster* https://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Restricted-Access-Poster_8.5x11_FA.pdf

- *If **YES** to **ANY** Question – patient screened **POSITIVE***
- *If **NO** to **ALL** Questions – patient screened **NEGATIVE***

If patient screens **POSITIVE**, document and,

- g) Advise EMS / CP as they will need to use routine and additional precautions for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- h) Document incident in the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Online Accident/Incident eForm for Employees or Students, Contractors and Visitors on-line incident / accident e-form. <https://ehs.utoronto.ca/report-an-incident/>
- i) Ensure proper personal care, discard gloves if worn*, perform hand hygiene, and decontamination of equipment (first aid kit), prior to leaving scene, e.g. contact caretaking to initiate cleaning and disinfection of the area when there is a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19. Ensure disinfectant wipes are made available, e.g. placed with first aid kit and/or in First Aid Room. Disinfectant wipes stations will also be available in accessible common areas of buildings, e.g. lobby, classrooms.

When EMS is not required, and the patient is not taken to hospital, and the employee appears to have symptoms of COVID-19 and/or has answered 'yes' during screening, they should be sent home immediately and instructed to take the self-assessment <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>.

* refer to **Appendix B: Steps to take off gloves to avoid contamination**

II. Attending to an unresponsive person

Providing first aid during the COVID-19 pandemic can raise questions around safety and transmission. Outlined below are the first aid protocols from the Canadian Red Cross that should be followed when attending to an unresponsive person. Protocols also found here: <https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/first-aid-tips-and-resources/first-aid-tips/first-aid-protocols-for-an-unresponsive-person-during-covid-19>

Assure Medical Aid

Emergency Contacts

- a) Call emergency services at (9) 9-1-1
- b) Notify Campus Police - Emergency:
 - 416-978-2222 (St. George Campus)
 - 905-569-4333 (Mississauga Campus),
 - 416-978-2222 (Scarborough Campus)

First Aider's discretion to perform or not perform mouth to mouth breaths

It is at the individual's discretion to perform or not perform mouth-to-mouth breaths based on personal preference. If the individual chooses to perform breaths, they can also use a barrier device, such as a pocket mask, to help protect themselves.

Hands-only CPR

CPR with breaths is recommended for people who have been trained in CPR, but as an alternative, hands-only CPR can be performed until help arrives if the First Aider is unsure about putting their mouth on a stranger's mouth, or has concerns the person may have COVID-19.

If the individual chooses to perform hands-only CPR,

- a. Call emergency services at (9) 9-1-1
- b. lay a cloth, a towel, or clothing over the person's mouth and nose to prevent any potential spread of the virus through contaminated air or saliva, and then
- c. push hard and fast in the centre of the person's chest until advanced help arrives.
- d. If the First Aider believes the person may have COVID-19, they should state their concerns to the emergency response telecommunicator so everyone who responds can be aware of the potential for COVID-19 transmission.

Assess the scene, and provide the level of care you are comfortable providing while maintaining physical distancing as appropriate

Follow protocol in **Section I**, g), h) and i).

Resources:

The Canadian Red Cross *First aid protocols for an unresponsive person during COVID-19*
<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/first-aid-tips-and-resources/first-aid-tips/first-aid-protocols-for-an-unresponsive-person-during-covid-19>

COVID-19 self-assessment
<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>

COVID-19 resources for the U of T community
<https://www.utoronto.ca/message-from-the-university-regarding-the-coronavirus#faq>

COVID-19 University Building Entrance Screening Tool, see also Appendix A
https://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Restricted-Access-Poster_8.5x11_FA.pdf

Steps to take off gloves (Public Health Ontario), see also Appendix B
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/E/2013/ect-gloves-doffing.pdf?la=en>

Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Fact Sheet.
https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/8d59-Fact-Sheet_Novel-Coronavirus.pdf

Appendix A: COVID-19 University Building Entrance Screening Poster

COVID-19: Protect Yourself and Your Community

**ATTENTION:
READ BEFORE
ENTERING**



**THIS BUILDING IS OPEN TO MEMBERS
OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ONLY.**

Do you have any of the following:

- Fever
- Cough that's new or worsening
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- Feeling unwell

Refer to your local public health website for an updated listing of symptoms.

Have you been in close contact with someone who is sick or has confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the past 14 days?

**If you've answered yes to any of the questions above, STOP.
Please do not enter the premises.**

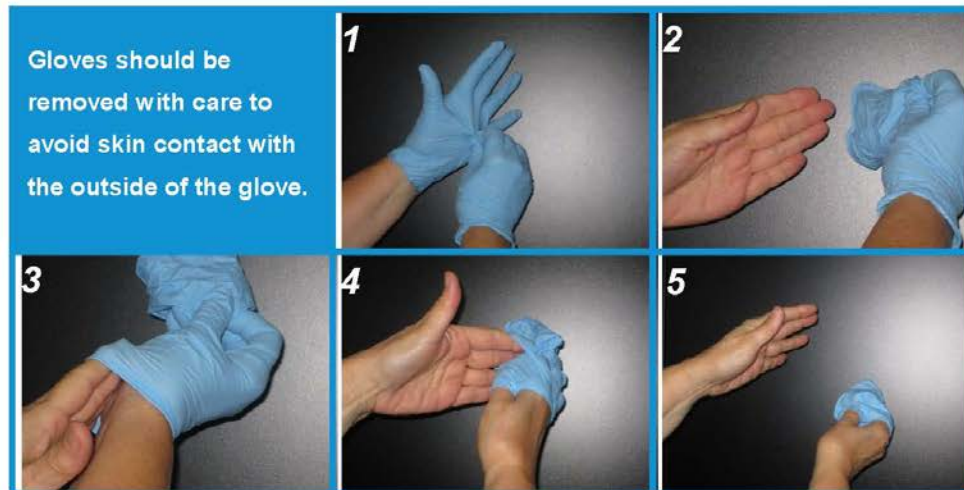
Remember to perform hand hygiene upon entry and follow safety precautions required when onsite.

If you experience symptoms of COVID-19, go home, self-isolate, refer to your local public health website, or call your health care provider or Telehealth Ontario at **1-866-797-0000**. Inform your manager or applicable University contact.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, contact ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca immediately.

Appendix B: Steps to take of gloves to avoid contamination

Steps to Take Off Gloves



©Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion 2013

Disposable gloves should be removed as follows:

- 1** Remove gloves using a glove-to-glove/skin-to-skin technique. First, grasp the outside of one glove at the palm.
- 2** Peel glove away from the palm toward the fingers, rolling the glove inside-out. Be careful not to touch your skin with your gloved hand. The contamination is now on the inside. Ball the glove up and hold in your other gloved hand.
- 3** Carefully slide the un-gloved index finger inside the wrist band of the gloved hand. Try and avoid touching the outside of the glove because that is the contaminated region.
- 4** Gently pull outwards and down toward the fingers, removing the glove inside out.
- 5** Pull the glove down so that the first glove ends up inside the second glove and no part of the outside is exposed. Throw away both gloves in an appropriate container. Perform hand hygiene.

