

Hamilton Central Office

**SAFETY
PLAN**

Hamilton Central Office
of Alcoholics Anonymous
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January 4, 2021

As required by both the City of Hamilton and Hamilton Public Health, this document is the COVID-19 Response Safety Plan. The practices and procedures laid out in this document are completed by the volunteers on shift, and the volunteers on each shift are responsible for implementation and monitoring compliance with the recommended infection prevention and control measures laid out in the following document.

We, the undersigned, have been made aware of this document, have read the document, have been given the opportunity to ask for clarification, and agree to abide by the practices and procedures laid out.

First Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/2021

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What's in this document?

This document contains the procedure and policies in place at the Hamilton Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is broken up into three sections. The first section focuses on the Provincial Guidelines and Suggestions, and the Office's Response to each. The second section focuses on the Safety Plan measures suggested by the Province of Ontario. The third section is a quick recap of what the Safety Plan consists of, making it easier and more accessible to those interested in what the Plan is.

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**Much of the information relayed in this document came from the Government of Ontario's guidance on Developing a Safety Plan.

First Step in COVID-19 Safety is Awareness.

COVID-19 can be spread in two main ways:

- person to person, by people who are in close contact
- by surfaces or objects, when people touch their face with contaminated hands

The key risk factors for COVID-19 transmission include:

- prolonged exposure - spending more time with potentially infected people
- close proximity - working close to others
- crowded places - having more people in a space
- closed spaces - indoor spaces less fresh air (working indoors is riskier than working outdoors)
- forceful exhalation – activities that cause people to breathe more deeply, such as exercise, speaking loudly and singing

It is possible for COVID-19 to be spread by people who do not have any symptoms. Act as if everyone is infected.

Our Response:

- Our Office hours are reduced to 10 am to 1 pm, which eliminates the need for a shift change, and keeps us only in shared space for three hours.
- The work stations are already separated at a physically safe distance, and with a maximum of three volunteers on shift at one time (two in the Office, one in the Telephone Answering Service), it decreases the need for us to cross into each other's space.
- Any member of our Fellowship who accesses our services by attending the Office in-person has clearly marked out spaces to stand in, and is clearly separated from Office volunteers by a countertop.
- The windows are able to be opened, and the door is propped open to the hallway to allow and encourage air-flow. There is a space heater available, to warm the space if it is decided to open a window.
- There is hand sanitizer available to both Members attending in-person and volunteers, at each workstation, and surface sanitizer available to volunteers to sanitize shared surfaces and objects regularly throughout the shift, and after each Member attends the space. There is also a container of wipes available at each workstation.

Controlling the COVID-19 Risks in the Office

Control measures are the steps we take to reduce the risks to everyone in our Office. With an infectious disease like COVID-19, controls in place can help to break the chain of transmission of the virus and reduce the risk of an outbreak.

Examples of measures to implement in order to control potential exposure to COVID-19 include:

- screening
- physical distancing and barriers
- good ventilation
- frequent cleaning and disinfection of surfaces
- source control masking
- personal protective equipment

In situations where one or more controls cannot be consistently maintained it is especially important that other controls are in place.

Using the hierarchy of controls (described below) can help us choose the right controls for the Office.

- Elimination: Remove the risk of exposure entirely from the workplace. For example, having everyone work from home would eliminate COVID-19 risk.
- Substitution: Replace a hazardous substance with something less hazardous. For an infectious disease such as COVID-19, substitution is not an option.
- Engineering controls: Make physical changes, including changes that support physical distancing and hygiene. For example:
 - install plexiglass barriers to separate workers from customers
 - remove unnecessary doors that many people would have to touch
- Administrative controls: Make changes to the ways people work and interact, using policies, procedures, training and signage. For example:
 - establish contactless curbside pickup
 - create policies to limit the number of people in a space at one time
 - schedule to stagger work shifts and breaks
 - establish new cleaning and disinfection protocols
 - provide education and training on proper hand-washing technique
 - set up a screening process
- Personal protective equipment (PPE): This is equipment and clothing worn by a worker to minimize exposure to hazards and prevent illnesses and infection. Correct use of PPE can help prevent some exposures, but it should not take the place of other control measures. PPE must be used alongside other control measures.

****Using masks as a control measure:** A mask is a piece of equipment that covers the wearer's nose, mouth and chin. It is fixed to the face with straps, ties or elastic, either behind the head or with ear loops. For COVID-19 protection, masks can be used as workplace control measures in two ways:

- as source control: workers and visitors wear the mask to protect those around them
- as personal protective equipment (PPE): workers wear the mask (along with eye protection) to protect themselves

Not all masks are suitable for both purposes. You need to consider how you will use the mask and make sure to select a suitable type of mask. Cloth masks are not PPE. How effective masks are as a control measure depends on:

- the type of mask(s) used
- masks being worn properly and consistently

Our Response:

Control measures that we will be taking to reduce the risks in our Office include:

- Screening: There will be questionnaires made available to Members attending the Office, in-person. If chosen to not fill out the Screening Questionnaire, the Volunteer will ask the same screening questions upon the Member's arrival when taking contact information for Contact Tracing.
- Physical distancing and barriers: The workstations for the Volunteers are at a physically safe distance, and the Members attending the Office in-person are requested to stay on the other side of the countertop, which again is at a physically safe distance.
- Good ventilation: With the Office door propped open, air flow is encouraged with the rest of the building, and there is the possibility of opening windows in either the board room or stockroom.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of surfaces: There is hand sanitizer made available to the Members attending the Office in-person, and at each workstation. There is surface sanitizer available for cleaning hard surfaces throughout the Office. There are containers of disinfecting wipes available at each workstation. Each Volunteer is asked to clean and disinfect their workstation at the end of their shift, and commonly touched surfaces and objects as they see fit, as often as after every Member leaves the Office.
- Source control masking (*workers and visitors wearing masks to protect those around them*): The Office requires that all those who attend the Office in-person, including volunteers, be wearing a mask, or face covering, as per City of Hamilton By-Law 20-155, unless exempt. The Dream Center also requires a mask/face covering on the premises, so masks/face covering should be worn throughout the hallways as well. We will ensure that we always have a stock of

disposable masks available to those who don't have one, or need to replace theirs. Please note: YOU are responsible for making sure to select a suitable type of mask for what you need it and for considering how you will use it. The effectiveness of a mask depends on the type of mask(s) used, and whether it is being worn properly and consistently. Cloth masks are not effective PPE.

- Personal protective equipment: Each Volunteer has the right to decide how much PPE they want to be wearing - disposable masks and gloves are available on the back table. Anything else can be purchased and worn at the cost of the Volunteer.

Using the hierarchy of controls, specifically considering the Office:

- Elimination: Having Volunteers work from home would not be an effective measure, as the majority of our work is in-person. TAS is able to be transferred off-site to Volunteers who answer the HelpLine for their three-hour shift, if chosen by the Volunteer.
- Engineering controls: Many of the changes we could be making were already in place - workstations at a physically safe distance, separation from Members attending the Office in-person, having a physical barrier between Volunteers and Members attending in-person. Some additional controls put into place include signage about physical distancing, the ability to rope off the Volunteer area to restrict access by Members, and closing the boardroom as there is only a certain amount of space available, holding a maximum capacity of 6.
- Administrative controls:
 - At the Office, we can offer contactless curbside pickup - bringing packages to the parking lot behind the building, or street level out front. It would require a phone order, and pre-payment. We are not able to do online ordering at this time.
 - We currently have our required minimum of two volunteers on shift, with perhaps one additional volunteer in TAS, and ask Members who attend in-person stay distant until the space has cleared. Signage is available to set up in the hallway on busier days, but has not been necessary as of yet.
 - With our minimum requirement of two volunteers, and not more, both volunteers are required to be on site. With only two volunteers, we do not see a need to schedule staggered shifts, and breaks are not necessary for a three hour shift. Volunteers are welcome to excuse themselves at any time, but one must remain in the Office at all times, during our operating hours, enabling the ability to stagger those breaks taken.
 - On shift, the volunteers have been instructed to increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection procedures. Commonly touched surfaces should

be sanitized after each Member attends the Office in-person. At the end of each shift, or upon leaving the workstation, each desk and all commonly touched surfaces and objects should be cleaned and sanitized. There is surface sanitizer available in refillable spray bottles, to be used with paper towel, or there are Lysol wipes available at each workstation.

- There is instruction on proper hand-washing techniques available at the sink, and hand soap is available for those who would prefer washing with soap and water. There is also instruction on how to properly hand sanitize available by hand sanitizer pumps accessible by both volunteers and Members attending the Office in-person. Hand sanitizer is available at each workstation, at the front door of the Office, and on the counter at which Members attend the Office in-person.
- Screening is required by all volunteers and Members attending the Office in-person. There are two methods by which this can be completed. It can be done, individually, by filling out a questionnaire designed to also record contact tracing information, or by the volunteer verbally, while taking contact information, for the purpose of contact tracing.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE): The Office requires that all those who attend the Office in-person, including volunteers, be wearing a mask, or face covering, as per City of Hamilton By-Law 20-155, unless exempt. The Dream Center also requires a mask/face covering on the premises, so masks/face covering should be worn throughout the hallways as well. Each Volunteer has the right to decide how much PPE they want to be wearing - disposable masks and gloves are provided, and available on the back table. Anything else can be purchased and worn at the cost of the Volunteer.

COVID-19 Safety Plan: for Ontario Workplaces

Business name: Hamilton Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
627 Main St E, Suite 205
Hamilton ON L8K 1J5

Date completed: January 4, 2021

Date distributed: January 11, 2021

Revision date:

Developed by: Kristin Evans
Office Committee Chair, 2020-2021

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation – this plan will be reviewed regularly and updated when needed - frequently referring to both the Ontario government's, and Hamilton Public Health's, COVID-19 website for up-to-date information.

1. How will you ensure all workers know how and are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?

Actions:

- Education provided through documentation posted visibly for both Volunteers and Members attending the Office in-person. This documentation will be obtained by only reliable sources (ie. Hamilton Public Health, Government of Ontario).
- Chair will stay updated on developments in precautions, procedures and policies in place, and upcoming, and will contact Hamilton Public Health for clarification whenever needed.
- Frequent informational updates compiled and provided by the Chair via e-mail, printed for display, and posted on the COVID-19 Update page on the aahamilton.org Website. The chair will also provide information during monthly reports at Hamilton Inter-District.

2. How will you screen for COVID-19?

Actions: *(for more information, see Pages 6 and 8)*

- Chair will be responsible for staying up to date with what current symptoms are.
- Chair will ensure that copies of the screening tool, sourced from Hamilton Public Health, are available for use.

- Volunteers will be responsible for screening both themselves and those Members attending the Office in-person, either by asking for the questionnaire to be handed in, or verbally.
- Volunteers will also be responsible for ensuring Contact Tracing information is gathered from each Member attending the Office in-person.
- These screenings will be required for every person coming in the door, upon arrival, once per day.

3. How will you control the risk of transmission in your workplace?

Actions: (for more information, see Pages 4 and 6-8)

- Chair to ensure that signage for safe physical distancing is accurately placed and visible, that all who attend the Office can do so safely.
- Volunteers responsible for maintaining, and reminding those attending about, safe physical distancing, including where to stand in order to safely receive services and product.
- Chair to ensure that cleaning/disinfecting products are in stock, and filled up.
- Volunteers responsible for cleaning and sanitizing between visits and at the end of each shift. It is also recommended to sign off on cleaning duties so the next shift is aware that it was completed.
- Chair to ensure that there is soap at the sink, and hand sanitizer available at each workstation and for those attending the Office in-person. Chair also responsible for maintaining signage about healthy hand-washing habits.
- Volunteers responsible for maintaining healthy hand hygiene, and encouraging those attending the Office to do the same.
- Chair to ensure that disposable masks and gloves are provided and in good supply, and that By-Law signage is posted throughout the Office. Educational information also to be available and accessible for those who are interested.
- Volunteers responsible for ensuring those entering the Office are wearing a face covering, unless exempt as per City of Hamilton By-Law 20-155. Volunteers are also required to be wearing a face covering at all times in the Office, unless exempt.
- Chair to ensure that boardroom is closed to large groups and that all common food preparation utilities (ie. toaster and coffee maker) are put away and not used. Chair to ensure that all water cups available are single use and that supply levels necessary for safe garbage removal are available.
- Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the practices listed in the point directly above are followed through on. (No sharing of food on-site.)
- Chair to be open and receptive to any and all suggestions made by volunteers and Members attending, to be safer. Chair also to be available and willing to answer questions and offer clarification on COVID-19 procedures in place.

4. What will you do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at your workplace?

Actions:

- Chair to ensure that volunteers are aware of sick policy - staying home if not feeling well, or presenting with any of the suspected COVID-19 symptoms. Chair also to ensure that all who attend in-person have the opportunity to be informed about symptoms and self-isolation, and when it is required.
- Volunteers to communicate with Chair about potential absences, general unwellness, or if awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- Chair to ensure information is posted about who to contact if a suspected exposure occurs.
- Volunteers responsible for obtaining contact information from each Member that attends the Office in-person.
- In the case that a suspected exposure has occurred, the Office will close for a thorough cleaning and sanitization. The Office Chair and Volunteers will keep the Office closed for the remainder of the week, reopening the following Monday. The Chair will ensure that Hamilton Public Health has a point contact person, ensuring they receive any and all contact tracing information that they request. In the case of a potential exposure, the Office Chair will also be responsible for informing those who attended the Office in-person to watch for symptoms.

5. How will you manage any new risks caused by changes to the way you operate your business? How will you make sure your plan is working?

Actions:

- Chair will ensure availability for feedback or comments on procedures and policies in place, and on efficacy of Safety Plan in place. This feedback, or comments, can be passed to the Chair through written notice, e-mail or through personal contact, if chosen.
- Volunteers, and Members, have the right to a voice about the policies and procedures in place, and to discuss if there are changes required to ensure that all who attend the Office in-person feel safe and secure.
- This Safety Plan will be reviewed on a bi-weekly basis, and/or immediately upon receipt of feedback or comments that directly relate to the continued health and safety of the Volunteers and Members. It can be reviewed by the Chair, or Volunteers in combination with the Chair. This review can be done in-person, or electronically via online platform.
- The Chair will be responsible for putting into place any new ideas brought into the Office, ensuring the health and safety of all who attend.

***I am responsible,
When any one, any where
Reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA
Always to be there.
And for that
I am Responsible.***

COVID-19 Safety Plan: Snapshot

Business name: Hamilton Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
627 Main St E, Suite 205
Hamilton ON L8K 1J5

Date completed: January 4, 2021 Revision date:
Developed by: Kristin Evans, Office Committee Chair, 2020-2021

Measures we're taking:

How we're ensuring workers know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19

- Documentation posted visibly, obtained from reliable sources (ie. Government).
- Stay up to date on developments, and seek clarification whenever needed.
- Frequent updates provided through a multitude of accessible formats.

How we're screening for COVID-19

- Staying up to date with what current symptoms are.
- Ensuring all those attending the Office have been screened every day visiting the Office and that Contact Tracing information is gathered from each person, utilizing the screening tool sourced from Hamilton Public Health.

How we're controlling the risk of transmission in our workplace

Physical distancing and separation

- Signage about physical distancing is accurately placed and visible, including where to stand in order to safely receive services and product.
- Workstations are already at a physically safe distance, and a countertop physically separates Members and Volunteers during transactions.

Cleaning

- Ensure that cleaning/disinfecting products are in stock, and filled up.
- Sanitizing surfaces between visits and clean workstations at the end of the shift.
- Ensure that handwashing is possible, and hand sanitizer available at each workstation, at the door and on the counter. Signage posted about healthy hand-washing and -sanitizing habits for all those attending the Office.

Other

- Disposable masks and gloves are available, and By-Law signage is posted. Educational information also available and accessible for those interested.
- Ensuring that all Volunteers and Members entering the Office are abiding by City of Hamilton By-Law 20-155, and wearing a face covering, unless exempt.
- Closing the boardroom to large groups and removing all common food preparation utilities. All cups available are single use and disposable.
- Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that all the procedures are followed.

What we will do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at our workplace

- Sick policy in place - volunteers to stay home if not feeling well, or presenting with any of the suspected COVID-19 symptoms, communicating with Chair about potential absences, general unwellness, or if awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- Ensure the opportunity to be informed about symptoms and self-isolation, and when it is required and who to contact if a suspected exposure occurs.
- Volunteers responsible for obtaining Contact Tracing information.
- In the case that a suspected exposure has occurred, the Office will close for the remainder of the week, for a thorough cleaning and sanitization, reopening the following Monday. In the case of a potential exposure, the Chair will communicate with those affected and ensure that all requirements are satisfied.

How we're managing any new risks caused by the changes made to the way we operate our business

- Volunteers, and Members, have the right to a voice about the policies and procedures in place, and to discuss if there are changes required to ensure that all who attend the Office in-person feel safe and secure.

How we're making sure our plan is working

- Staying open and receptive to any and all suggestions made, and available to answer questions and offer clarification on COVID-19 procedures in place.
- This Safety Plan will be reviewed on a bi-weekly basis, and/or immediately upon receipt of feedback or comments that directly relate to the continued health and safety of the Volunteers and Members.