

COVID-19 Class Order: May 22, 2020

What is a class order?

A class order is a legal order that enables Halton Region Public Health to enforce self-isolation requirements for a group of individuals that it applies to. These efforts are being made to protect the local community from potential exposure to COVID-19.

Under what authority has this class order been issued?

On May 21, 2020, Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health issued a class order under Section 22 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. This Act authorizes a class order to be issued to address the risks presented by the potential spread of COVID-19 to people who reside or are present in Halton Region.

Why did the Medical Officer of Health issue this class order?

As restrictions begin to loosen at the provincial and local levels, more people will be out in the community and it is therefore more important than ever to ensure that those who need to self-isolate do so, for the protection of all residents.

The class order was issued in order to strengthen Halton Region Public Health's ability to reduce the loss of life from COVID-19, and preserve and protect the capacity of our health care system to respond and provide care for those who need it.

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 comply. Halton Region Public Health is available to provide support to those who need assistance. However, this class order is a legal tool to help us ensure that everyone who needs to self-isolate, complies with that direction.

Who is required to self-isolate under this class order?

All persons residing in or present in Halton Region who:

- a) are diagnosed with COVID-19;
- b) have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the results of their test;
- c) have one or more symptoms (even mild symptoms) of COVID-19, or have had such symptom(s) within the past 14 days;
- d) are a close contact of a person identified in (a), (b) or (c); or
- e) are a parent, or person with responsibilities of a parent, of a person under sixteen years of age identified in (a), (b), (c) or (d) who resides or is present in Halton Region.

Further details on the symptoms of COVID-19 and the definition of "close contact" are included in the class order.

When is the class order effective? How long must people self-isolate?

The class order is effective from 12:01 a.m. on May 22, 2020 and will remain in effect until such time as the Medical Officer of Health determines it is no longer required.

Self-isolation is generally for a period of 14 days from the first onset of symptom(s), from testing or from diagnosis with COVID-19, whichever is earliest, and provided the individual does not have a fever and their other symptom(s) are improving on the 14th day. For close contacts, it is usually for 14 days from last known exposure to the probable or confirmed case of COVID-19. Sometimes, public health officials may direct an individual to extend the period of isolation, depending upon symptoms and test results.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, modifications to the class order can be made for the following people:

- a person who, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, provides an essential service, for the limited purpose of providing that essential service;
- a person receiving essential medical services or treatments, whether related to COVID-19 or not; or
- where a person's isolation, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, would not be in the public interest.

Please contact Halton Region Public Health at accesshalton@halton.ca or 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866 for more information

What does it mean to self-isolate under the class order?

Individuals who are affected by the class order are required to stay at home and not to have visitors, except as permitted by Halton Region Public Health (for example, where a health care worker is visiting the home). The other things you must do while self-isolating are explained in the class order and the Public Health Ontario fact sheet, *How to Self-Isolate*, that forms part of that order.

If a person with COVID-19 is homeless or their home is otherwise unsuitable or unsafe for isolation purposes, assistance with accommodations can be provided.

People in self-isolation should arrange to have groceries and other necessities delivered to them. If you need assistance, please see our list of resources at halton.ca/COVID19.

I am required to self-isolate but need support to do so. Who should I contact?

Halton Region Public Health is available to assist residents who need help in order to properly self-isolate or while self-isolating. Individuals who need support can contact Halton Region Public Health by email at accesshalton@halton.ca or by calling 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866.

What should I do if my illness gets worse while I am self-isolating?

Seek **immediate** medical attention if your illness is worsening (for example, you have difficulty breathing) by **calling 9-1-1**. Tell them of your COVID-19 diagnosis or symptom(s) and answer all screening questions accurately (including symptoms and travel history) so that you will receive appropriate care and the right infection prevention and control precautions are taken.

How could the class order be enforced if a person fails to self-isolate?

As is our general practice with these kinds of orders, Halton Region Public Health will attempt to engage directly with a person failing to self-isolate to make sure that they understand what is required of them, and to see if they need support in an effort to gain voluntary compliance. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the MOH will consider the need for legal action to compel compliance.

Individuals who are required to self-isolate by this class order but fail to do so can be charged and fined up to \$5,000 per day. The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* also allows the MOH to go to court and seek an order to protect the health of the community by taking the person into custody to be confined in a hospital or other appropriate facility until the self-isolation period is over.

For more information, contact Halton Region Public Health by email at accesshalton@halton.ca or call 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866.

Can a person challenge the class order?

Any person subject to the class order may request a hearing by the Health Services Appeal and Review Board to challenge its requirements. Refer to the class order for details.

How does the Medical Officer of Health's class order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* differ from the federal order under the *Quarantine Act*?

The federal government's quarantine order is aimed at all travellers entering Canada, effective March 25, 2020. That order also imposes a 14-day home quarantine (self-isolation) on travellers regardless whether they have symptoms of COVID-19. See the Government of Canada's [instructions for travellers from outside Canada](#) for more information.

In some cases, individuals subject to home quarantine or isolation measures under the federal quarantine order may also be subject to the class order issued by Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health (for example, individuals who are diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also recently returned from travel).

More Information:

If you have questions about the class order, please contact Halton Region Public Health:

- by phone: 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866; or
- by email: accesshalton@halton.ca.

Residents who have COVID-19 symptoms can be assessed by a health care provider:

- at an Assessment Centre (you must have an appointment):
 - **Residents of Oakville, Milton or Halton Hills:** Call 905-203-7963 to book an appointment at a Halton Healthcare Assessment Centre.
 - **Residents of Burlington:** Call 905-632-3737, ext. 6550, to book an appointment at Joseph Brant Hospital COVID-19 Assessment Clinic.
- by contacting their primary care provider.