

# Modified Self-isolation for Essential Services Guidelines

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## **Objective**

The current (May 28, 2021) Provincial Public Health Order as declared by the Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan requires under Section 2 and Subsections k-o that person(s):

- having novel coronavirus (COVID-19);
- identified as a close contact of a person or persons with COVID-19; and
- who have travelled internationally;

shall go into mandatory self-isolation for a specified period of time.

Close contacts of a person or persons with COVID-19 shall self-isolate for 14 days from the date of their last exposure to COVID-19. Further information on self-isolation can be found here:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/about-covid-19/self-isolation>

In some cases where this Public Health Order is applied, the absence of an employee who is required to self-isolate may impact the delivery of essential services which may pose a risk to the health and safety of the public. If an employer becomes aware that an employee is a close contact and that they may meet the criteria of eligibility for modified self-isolation, the employer may make an application on behalf of the employee for modified self-isolation.

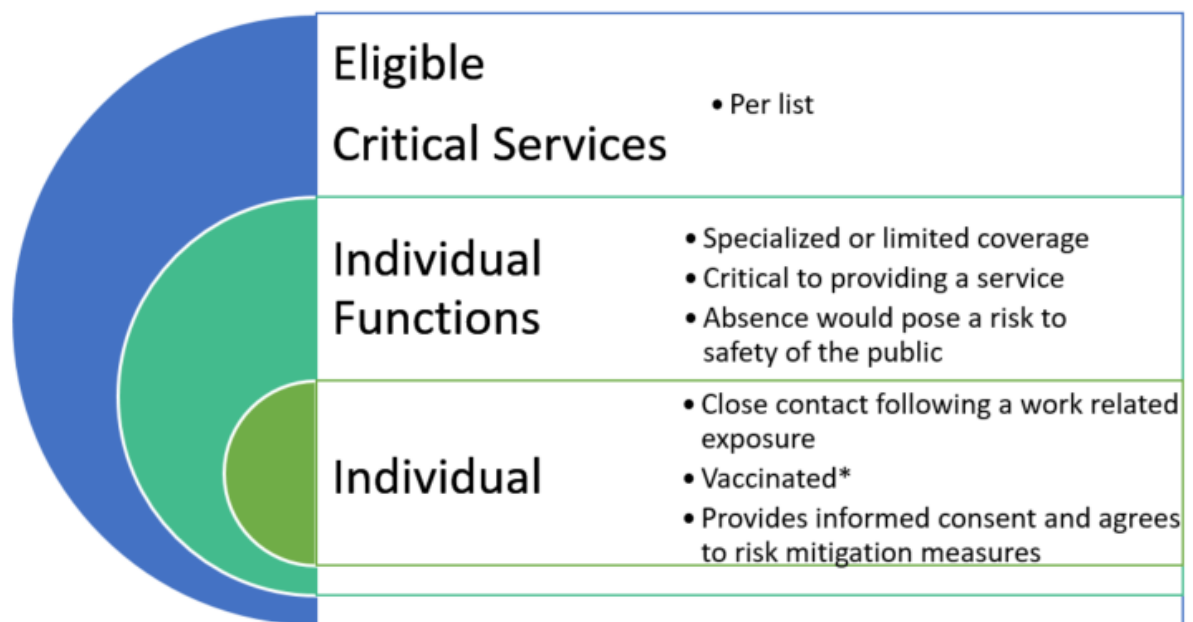
To be eligible for modified self-isolation, a medical health officer must be satisfied that the following criteria is met:

1. The employee provides an essential service, as described in Appendix A;
2. The employee's inability to provide that essential service due to self-isolation would pose a safety risk to the public; and
3. The employee was partially vaccinated at the time of their exposure to COVID-19.

**“partially vaccinated”** means:

1. An individual has received one dose of any COVID-19 vaccine, and at least 14 days have passed since the individual received the dose; or
2. An individual has received two doses of any COVID-19 vaccine, but 14 days have not passed since the individual received their second dose.

These essential service (Appendix A) employers may submit an application for Modified Isolation on behalf of an employee who has been partially vaccinated. The exemption from isolation is only for the time necessary to provide the service. The employer must demonstrate that all other business continuity options have been exhausted and their absence would pose a risk to the safety of the public.



Essential Service employees granted an exemption shall follow outlined restrictions, screening and testing, and monitoring throughout the isolation period. The employer is to ensure that additional mitigation measures will be put in place so that the health and safety of other workers in the workplace are not materially affected. Essential service employees will not be permitted to work unless granted an exemption as outlined in the process below.

### **Process for Requesting an Exemption**

The employer must initiate the process and submit the Application for Exemption. The Employer must do the following:

1. Ensure that the individuals are not permitted to work or provide service unless granted a provincial exemption from self-isolation.
2. Review list of eligible essential services (Appendix A) to confirm eligibility before proceeding with process.
3. Obtain consent from the employee to proceed with the Application for Exemption. The consent must clearly identify the employee understands the requirements and that disclosure of their personal health information to the employer and the local occupational health and safety committee is required (Appendix C).

4. The employer (senior official designation) must complete the application form in consultation with the employee and the local Occupational Health and Safety Committee (Appendix B). Ensure all information provided to avoid any unnecessary delays.
5. Submit the application to the local Medical Health Officer.
6. The request will be reviewed by the Medical Health Officer and the result of the request will be communicated back to the employer.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

1. Employer
  - Obtain informed consent from the employee before proceeding with the application process.
  - Engage the local Occupational Health and Safety Committee in the process if available.
  - Must conduct a hazard assessment to ensure that appropriate mitigating control measures have been put in place.
  - Complete application form and ensure all information is provided to demonstrate that:
    - i. the employee is essential to providing a service and that their absence would pose a risk of safety of the public;
    - ii. all other business continuity options have been exhausted;
    - iii. the local occupational health and safety committee has reviewed and support the application; and
    - iv. risk mitigation measures will be put in place so that the health and safety of other workers in the workplace are not materially affected.
  - If the exemption is approved:
    - i. Ensure that employees follow the additional risk mitigation measures within workplace to address any new hazards presented due to this change in self-isolation practices. This includes:
      - Establish a process to monitor employees' compliance with daily self-assessment and symptom monitoring;
      - Monitoring for continuous use of a mask at work for all employees;
      - Providing PPE that is suitable to the hazard assessment and ensure training for appropriate donning, doffing and use;
      - Ensuring access to hand hygiene products;
      - Environmental cleaning procedures are adhered to;
      - Monitoring for adherence to physical distancing;
      - Adjusting the work environment to the extent possible to minimize interaction with other staff and members of the public;
      - Adjust scheduling to ensure cohorting to the unit/site;
      - Designating time or space for breaks away from other staff members;
      - Determining that the employee is able to avoid exposing others while in transit to and from work (e.g. no carpooling, access to private transportation);
      - Implement rapid testing of staff members if available; and
      - Support employee to access required testing during the isolation period.
    - ii. Implement and ensure that workers follow all additional safety measures as advised by the Medical Health Officer, Public Health, and this exemption.

- If the employee's Occupational Health & Safety department has capacity, they may assist Public health with monitoring. The name and contact information of designate from OH&S department will be provided on the application to facilitate further coordination.

## 2. Employee

- Provide informed consent to the application process, the disclosure of their personal health information to the employer, and agree to risk mitigation measures during the self isolation period (Appendix C)
- Routine Risk mitigation measures include:
  - i. Daily monitoring for symptoms; if symptoms develop or are present isolate immediately;
  - ii. Testing during the self isolation period.
    - PCR lab testing regardless of symptoms immediately after the exposure and again at Day 7 post exposure.
    - Antigen testing may also be completed where available but only if employee is asymptomatic.
  - iii. Symptom monitoring twice each day – if any symptoms, even minor, please isolate immediately. If symptoms develop after initial testing then you need to be re-tested. **\*\* If symptoms develop, the permission to work is void, isolate immediately, and call 811 to arrange for testing. You may return to work once negative test result is received and you are 48 hrs symptom free.**
  - iv. Continue to be vigilant with all of the COVID-19 protocols on the Ministry of Health website, <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus>
- Additional Risk mitigation measures
  - i. Working at designated site only, as long as you have not have had any symptoms in the last week and do not develop any during this time.
  - ii. Continue to follow all self-isolation guidelines when not at work, in route to and from work, and adhere to all restrictions outlined when at work.
  - iii. Follow all current Infection Prevention & Control policies and procedures for attending work ensuring that all processes to prevent transmission between staff members and the public are optimized including:
    - Performing the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool prior to each shift
    - Self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 (temperature twice daily)
    - Continuous use of a mask at work)
    - When required of job duties and workplace hazard assessment, wear the correct PPE and ensure donning, doffing and use is in alignment with training;
    - Performing hand hygiene often and effectively
    - Maintain physical distancing to the extent possible while performing the essential job duties;
    - The extent possible, minimize interaction with other staff and members of the public including taking breaks safely;
      - Self-isolate from other staff members during your shift i.e. no sharing meals with others, no breaks with others, no shared/communal food
      - Avoid all public spaces i.e. cafeteria, break room
    - Cohorting to the approved site for the entirety of the self-isolation period

iv. It is a requirement to be monitored by Public health and the employer throughout the isolation period.

3. Medical Health Officer and Public Health

- Public health to receive application
- Review employee's immunization status to ensure eligibility for modified isolation;
- Public health and MHO to review application.
- MHO to grant exemption or provide rationale for denial of application
- Public Health to continue monitoring employee as a close contact during isolation period.