

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[COVID-19 Recovery](#)

[Hamilton@Work](#)

[Hamilton Responds](#)

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Vaccine Verification Policy & Getting Vaccinated .....	2
2. Daily COVID-19 Health Screening .....	10
3. Potential Positive Cases, Contact Tracing & COVID-19 Exposure .....	12
4. Masks & Personal Protective Equipment .....	13
5. Municipal Workspaces, Cleaning & Facility Related Questions .....	16
6. Hamilton@Work: Flexible Work Models .....	18
7. Leadership Focused Questions .....	23

## 1. Vaccine Verification Policy & Getting Vaccinated

### 1.1 Why did the City approve a Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy?

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

On August 26, 2021, Hamilton City Council approved the [Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy](#). The Province of Ontario, through the Occupational Health and Safety Act, requires that employers ensure a safe workplace environment for their employees. The health and safety of our staff and all members of the public remains a top priority and the City is committed to doing our part to help mitigate a fourth wave of COVID-19. This policy contributes to those efforts.

### 1.2 What does fully vaccinated mean? What vaccines are approved?

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

As defined by the provincial government, people are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series. Vaccines approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization will be recognized. The City will continue to follow the guidance of public health organizations to define fully vaccinated.

### 1.3 I work in a Division where there are already vaccine verification directives issued by a Provincial Ministry, does the City's Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccine Verification Policy supersede these Directives?

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The City's [Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy](#) does not replace the programs in place in Hamilton Paramedic Services, Red Hill Family Centre, or in the City's Long-Term Care Homes in accordance with the Ministry directives governing those workplaces. Vaccination verification, vaccine education and rapid testing will continue without any changes at this time and employees who work in these areas will continue to follow the existing protocols in those settings.

## 1.4 What is considered acceptable proof or verification of vaccination?

Last update: September 2, 2021

Acceptable proof of verification of vaccination is one of the following documents:

1. Your Ministry of Health COVID-19 online vaccination receipt
  - You can download the receipt for both your first and second dose, but for verification purposes, you only need to submit the receipt of your second dose.
2. Your hardcopy receipt for receiving the vaccine (i.e. from your pharmacy or vaccination clinic where you received your vaccination).
  - A scan a photo of the receipt documents for both your first and second doses of the vaccine

## 1.5 How do I retrieve my Ministry of Health COVID-19 online vaccination receipt?

Last update: September 2, 2021

Download your vaccination receipt at <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/> (do not use Internet Explorer)

- check the box that confirms that you have read and understood the terms of use, then click “Continue”
- enter your Health Card information, then click “Continue”
  - Tip: if the two dashes that appear in your Health Card number do not appear automatically, include them
- under “Vaccination receipts,” select “Continue”
- click on “Download the receipt” under each vaccination

You can download the PDF receipt for both your first and second dose, but for verification purposes, you only need to submit the receipt of your second dose

- Tip: most desktop browsers will have a download icon in the top right hand corner to save the PDF file. Most mobile phone users will see a “send to” icon that can be used to attach the PDF to an email

If you have a red and white Health Card, or for technical support to assist you with downloading your proof of vaccination receipt, call the Provincial Vaccination Booking line at 1-833-943-3900. The call centre agent can email you a copy of your receipt.

## **1.6 How do I submit my proof of vaccination verification?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

All vaccination verification information should be emailed directly to [vaccine\\_verification@hamilton.ca](mailto:vaccine_verification@hamilton.ca), with the following information in the Subject line: [your name], as it appears on your pay cheque, and your [employee ID number].

Submissions may be made via facsimile/fax, at 905-546-4174. Please ensure that you include your name and employee ID number on that fax.

## **1.7 How do I know that my personal information will be stored and retained properly?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

Once your submission is made via email and entered into City systems, the email will be deleted/removed from City servers.

Personal information, including personal health information, is being collected under the authority of Section 4.1(2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, and Section 227 of the Municipal Act, 2001, for the purposes of confirming compliance with the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy. Information collected for this purpose will be securely stored and kept in accordance with Public Health and the Ontario Ministry of Labour retention guidelines.

Questions about the collection, use and disclosure of this information or the COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy can be directed to Matthew Sutcliffe (Director, Employee Health and Labour Relations, Human Resources, 905-546-2424 ext. 2655 or [Matthew.Sutcliffe@hamilton.ca](mailto:Matthew.Sutcliffe@hamilton.ca)).

## **1.8 Who sees my medical information and who will know my vaccination status?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

The City will maintain this information in accordance with all privacy legislation. This information will only be used to the extent necessary for implementation of this policy, health and safety protocols, and infection and prevention control measures in the workplace. Only those staff required to review this information for the purposes of determining policy compliance will see this information.

## **1.9 Will supervisors, have access to individual vaccination declarations, records?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

No, individual health information will remain private and confidential. Vaccine records or testing results will not be shared with supervisors or others. Only select staff in Human Resources will be able to access this information. Supervisors will be able to determine if a staff member is cleared to come to work by ensuring employees complete the daily health screening.

## **1.10 If I am fully vaccinated, do I need to adhere to other safety measures such as wearing a mask, self-screening?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Yes, you must adhere to all existing public health measures and the City's health and safety protocols, including current requirements to wear a mask indoors and maintain physical distancing, as applicable. Daily health screening will continue to be part of our COVID-19 safety requirements, and you can only attend work if you pass the screening

Before attending work each day employees must complete their daily health screening using the City's COVID-19 self-assessment screening tool.

- Online: [COVID-19 self-assessment online screening tool](#)
- Paper based: [COVID-19 self-assessment paper screening tool \(PDF\)](#)

This assessment is based on the provincial COVID-19 screening. Supervisors will review and validate, each workday that their direct reports have completed the daily health screening. The status of an individual's vaccination or testing will not be available to supervisors. This is confidential health information and will not be shared with supervisors.

## **1.11 If I'm not vaccinated, how often will I have to submit a negative rapid antigen test to attend work? Will I be tested at work or home?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The frequency of testing has yet to be determined and will be based on individual work schedules and other factors that offer the best protection for all workers in the workplace. Most employers are choosing home self-testing but a final decision has not been made.

## 1.12 I'm not vaccinated and don't have an exemption. What do I need to do?

Last update: October 15, 2021

If you haven't been vaccinated yet (or you decided not to provide your proof of vaccination) and you don't have an approved exemption, you are required to complete the mandatory education program about the benefits of getting vaccinated and complete and submit the Attestation Form which is included in the module. The education program takes approximately 20 minutes and can be completed virtually at: [www.hamilton.ca/VaccineEducation](http://www.hamilton.ca/VaccineEducation).

## 1.13 What is a considered a valid exemption to receiving the vaccine and how do I submit information to support an exemption?

Last update: September 2, 2021

Exemptions may occur for one of two reasons: medical exemptions and religious exemptions.

**Medical Exemptions** – if, for medical reasons, you are unable to receive vaccination against COVID-19, please email [vaccine\\_verification@hamilton.ca](mailto:vaccine_verification@hamilton.ca) and request a copy of the form for a licensed physician or nurse practitioner to complete. Upon completion, please submit the completed form to [vaccine\\_verification@hamilton.ca](mailto:vaccine_verification@hamilton.ca).

**Religious Exemptions** – if, for religious observance reasons, you are unable to receive vaccination against COVID-19, please submit a scanned copy of a letter from your religious leader that confirms the following:

- That you are a practicing member of that leader's congregation; and,
- That the practiced religion prohibits being vaccinated against COVID-19

These submissions will be reviewed by Human Resources on a case-by-case basis to determine exemption eligibility.

All exemptions should be emailed directly to [vaccine\\_verification@hamilton.ca](mailto:vaccine_verification@hamilton.ca), with the following information in the Subject line: [your name], as it appears on your pay cheque, and your [employee ID number].

You will receive an auto reply message confirming the receipt of your email. Alternatively, submissions may be made via facsimile/fax, to 905-546-4174. Please ensure that you include your name and employee ID number on that fax.

### **1.14 I will not be submitting verification of vaccination and I do not have an exemption. What will happen?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

As per the [Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy](#), all employees who have not yet submitted proof of their COVID-19 vaccination, and who don't have an approved exemption, are now required to complete a mandatory education program on the benefits of getting vaccinated.

The education program takes approximately 20 minutes and can be completed virtually at: [www.hamilton.ca/VaccineEducation](http://www.hamilton.ca/VaccineEducation). Submit the completed attestation form at the end of the training to [vaccine\\_verification@hamilton.ca](mailto:vaccine_verification@hamilton.ca)

As of November 1, 2021, if an employee has

- not submitted verification of vaccination; and/or
- has received an exemption from receiving a vaccination against COVID-19

that employee will be subject to rapid testing on a regular basis. The details of the rapid testing program have not yet been finalized, and more information will be provided once this process has been completed.

If you decide to submit proof that you are fully vaccinated to [vaccine\\_verification@hamilton.ca](mailto:vaccine_verification@hamilton.ca) in the future, you will no longer be required to complete rapid testing.

### **1.15 How do fully vaccinated staff work with staff who are not vaccinated?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

All of the health and safety protocols will remain in place to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace. This includes daily health screening, physical distancing, masking and hand hygiene. As of November 1, 2021, all employees attending work will either be fully vaccinated or have submitted a recent negative rapid antigen test.



### **1.16 Can I request a reassignment or transfer so that I don't have to work with someone who is not yet vaccinated?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

No. The best course of action in this situation is to continue to follow all of the health and safety precautions and speak to your manager and/or supervisor about your concerns.

### **1.17 Am I able to get vaccinated while on work time?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

If operationally feasible, staff can get vaccinated during their work time. Please refer to the [Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Verification Policy](#) and speak with your manager about time off to get vaccinated.

Employees will be provided with reasonable time during their shift to attend their appointment and receive their vaccine. Where this is not possible due to operational barriers, and to emphasize the importance of employee vaccination, employees will be granted 30 minutes of paid time to receive their vaccinations outside of their regular working hours

### **1.18 What do I do if my vaccine appointment conflicts with my work schedule?**

**Last update: September 2, 2021**

The City will provide flexibility for employees to attend their scheduled vaccination appointments. Employees are encouraged to try and schedule appointments at the beginning or end of their shift, or around breaks, wherever it is possible. Where that is not possible, employees should speak with their leader in advance to advise of their appointment and to allow for their leader to ensure that there is coverage during the time that the employee will be out of the workplace.

### **1.19 Do I need to take a Doctor's day (O-Day) to go to my vaccination appointment?**

**Last update: March 26, 2021**

Employees may choose to take an O-day to get their vaccination, but it is not required as the City is providing employees with reasonable time during shift to receive vaccination. Employees receiving a vaccine after work will be compensated 30 minutes for their time.



## **1.20 I got my vaccination, but now I don't feel well. What do I do?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

It is not uncommon to have side effects after receiving a vaccine. If you have mild symptoms within 48 hours of receiving the vaccine (headache, fatigue, muscle aches/joint pain) you can attend work provided you wear a surgical mask for the duration of time you are experiencing the minor symptoms and maintain physical distance. If you miss work due to these minor symptoms, the absence will be recorded as a sick time.

If you are not sure that your symptoms are related to receiving the vaccine, do not report to work and consult with your health care provider. If it is recommended that you should be tested for COVID 19, contact Occupational Health immediately at [covid19occhealth@hamilton.ca](mailto:covid19occhealth@hamilton.ca) or ext. 4726.

If you have symptoms that are on the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Screening Tool that cause you to fail the screening tool after vaccination, do not attend work and contact Occupational Health immediately at [covid19occhealth@hamilton.ca](mailto:covid19occhealth@hamilton.ca) or ext. 4726.

## **1.21 Is verification of vaccination being made a condition of employment for new hires? How is the City sharing this information with prospective candidates?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

As of September 27, 2021, the City of Hamilton updated its website and job postings to include our vaccine verification requirement. This will help ensure candidates are aware of the need for vaccine verification prior to applying. Additionally, offer letters have also been updated informing new hires that as a condition of employment they are required to provide proof that they are fully vaccinated or provide proof of valid exemption satisfactory to the employer prior to their start date.

## **1.22 I understand that the vaccination verification policy still applies to staff who are working from home. Do staff who are working from home who haven't submitted their verification or are unvaccinated still need to submit regular COVID-19 tests?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

As of November 1, 2021, all unvaccinated staff will enter the City's COVID-19 Rapid Testing Program and be required submit to regular testing results regardless if they are working from home.

## 2. Daily COVID-19 Health Screening

Online Screening Tool: [screening.hamilton.ca](https://screening.hamilton.ca) Paper Screening Tool: [Employee Resources](#)

### 2.1 How often and when should I complete the self-assessment health screening?

**Last update: January 11, 2021**

You must complete the self-assessment before entering any City of Hamilton facility, location or place of work. It is recommended to complete the self-assessment one hour before planned arrival time.

### 2.2 What technology is required to use the online self-assessment screening tool?

**Last update: July 6, 2020**

Any device (Desktop, Laptop, Tablet, Mobile Phone) that has an internet browser and connection to the internet can be used. The online self-assessment does not need to be completed on a City-issued device.

### 2.3 What should I do if the online self-assessment screening tool is not working or I am having issues using it?

**Last update: July 6, 2020**

If the online tool is not available or is not working for any reason, or you are having technical issues using the online tool, you should use the paper-based self-assessment instead – find it on eNet under [COVID-19 Employee Resources](#). Staff must complete the self-assessment before attending work, but having trouble with the self-assessment online tool isn't a good reason for not coming to work.

## **2.4 Am I required to send my online self-assessment results to someone?**

**Last update: January 11, 2021**

Yes – the results of your self-assessment must be sent to your leader (or designate) as per your section's business processes. It is a requirement of the online tool to enter the email address or phone number of the leader (or designate) that your self-assessment results should be sent to. Please connect with your leader to determine the process you should follow. To make sending your results easier, there is an option to save the contact information of your leader (or designate) so you do not have to enter it each time you complete the online self-assessment.

## **2.5 What should I do if I emailed my online self-assessment results, but the recipient did not receive it?**

**Last update: July 6, 2020**

Ask them to check their junk or spam email folder. It can take a few minutes for the email to be received. If the email is not received, take the self-assessment again and double check to make sure the email address you entered is accurate.

## **2.6 Which Division, Department & Section should I select if I have been temporarily redeployed to a new area?**

**Update: July 6, 2020**

When using the online self-assessment, select the Division, Department and Section to which you have been re-assigned, not your original home location or check with your leader for clarification if required.

## **2.7 Who can I contact if I find a bug or correction required to the online self-assessment tool?**

**Last update: July 6, 2020**

Suggestions, bugs or corrections required can be directed to [screeningtool@hamilton.ca](mailto:screeningtool@hamilton.ca).

## 2.8 Can visitors use the online self-assessment tool?

**Last update: January 11, 2021**

Just like staff do on a daily basis, all visitors with scheduled appointments at City facilities must also complete an active health screening.

In addition to the [paper version](#) that is available on eNet, active screening for visitors is now available as part of our online self-assessment screening tool at [screening.hamilton.ca](https://screening.hamilton.ca). Scheduled visitors can use the online health screening tool by selecting “Visitor to City Facility / Location” in the drop-down menu.

# 3. Potential Positive Cases, Contact Tracing & COVID-19 Exposure

## 3.1 What will happen if someone who works for the City tests positive for COVID-19, or is suspected to be infected? How will our staff be informed about possible exposure or know if they should get tested?

**Last update: November 17, 2020**

For any case of COVID-19, it is a reportable disease. This means, all positive cases are reported to public health who then follows up with this individual to make sure they are able to isolate and that they have supports they need.

Public health also looks at where an individual may have gotten COVID-19 and potential for spread before individual may have been sick.

[Responding to Positive COVID-19 Test Results for Employees or Visitors](#) outlines the roles, responsibilities and processes that leaders will follow to ensure the appropriate follow-up, communication and cleaning takes place when an employee or visitor tests positive for COVID-19.

### **3.2 With vaccines now in wider circulation, have there been any changes to self-isolation requirements? Do people who are vaccinated still need to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a confirmed case or someone with symptoms?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated are not required to self-isolate if they've had close contact with a positive COVID-19 case or someone with symptoms unless they have been directed to do so by a local public health unit. They should wear a mask and maintain physical distancing and monitor their symptoms for 10 days after the exposure.

### **3.3 What are the rules related to quarantining if you are traveling internationally? Will staff be paid if they need to quarantine?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The federal government governs the rules around any need for testing or quarantining upon arrival from international travel. Requirements differ based on whether or not you are fully vaccinated. For specific requirements based on your vaccination status visit <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid>.

If employees returning from travel outside of the country are required to quarantine, they will not be compensated. Employees can cover this period by using flex time, lieu time, vacation time or non-paid leave of absence. Employees may be able to work remotely during the quarantine period where feasible and as approved by their supervisor. Employees approved to work remotely must complete their regular hours to be paid.

## **4. Masks & Personal Protective Equipment**

### **4.1 Are employees required to wear a mask when working in a City workplace?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Employees who are working at an enclosed City of Hamilton workplace or facility are required to wear a mask.

Non-medical masks are mandatory in all indoor workplaces whether they are accessed by the public or not and must always be worn, even if separated from other employees or the public by a physical barrier except:

- When eating or drinking;
- During recovery time for first responders;
- When an employee is the only person in the workplace for an entire shift; or
- At individual workstations when employees are not actively moving about or interacting with other employees in the work space and only if appropriate physical distancing between employees is maintained.

Medical masks are required in some healthcare settings and in non-medical settings where physical distancing from others cannot be maintained.

The requirement to wear a mask is not a substitute for completing daily health screening, respecting the two-metre physical distance rule and practicing proper hand hygiene. Employees who are unable to wear a mask due to a documented medical reason should reach out to their leader and the Health, Safety and Wellness team to discuss possible accommodations.

If you are unsure what PPE is needed for your job, you can contact your leader, the Health, Safety & Wellness team or review the [Guidance for Use of Personal Protective Equipmentt](#).

## 4.2 What PPE are employees required to wear?

**Last update: November 17, 2020**

While all employees are required to wear a mask in enclosed City workplaces, employees in some specific work environments may require different PPE depending on the work activities being performed and the potential sources of exposure. Employees in these locations may be provided with an appropriate mask, gloves and eye protection or a combination.

If you are unsure what PPE is needed for your job, you can contact your leader, the Health, Safety & Wellness team or review the [Guidance for Use of Personal Protective Equipment](#).



### **4.3 Will employees be permitted to use their own masks if they want to?**

**Last update: November 17, 2020**

Employees required to wear non-medical masks in the workplace are allowed to wear their own appropriate masks. You can review what type of non-medical masks are appropriate in the workplace by reviewing the [Selection and Use of Medical and Non-Medical Masks in Non-Medical Settings](#) document.

Reusable non-medical masks will be provided to employees required to wear them in the workplace upon request. These masks can be ordered through the Supply Depot by following the [Supply Depot Ordering Standard Operating Procedure](#).

Employees in areas where specific PPE is not required may choose to wear their own non-medical mask.

All employees wearing masks must follow directions for proper use, cleaning and storage and the design of the mask does not violate any policies.

### **4.4 Do I have to wear a mask in the lunchroom?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

While it's important for us all to take breaks and eat our lunches, we've had situations where employees are taking breaks together and are spending time unmasked in an enclosed space together. This has resulted in a few cases where one employee tests positive for COVID-19 and others end up needing to self-isolate.

It's very important to keep your mask on when you are around others from another household indoors (even your work friends and colleagues), or when outdoors if you are unable to keep 2m or 6ft of physical distance. It's best to take breaks in shifts and stay as safe as possible while eating your lunch.

## 5. Municipal Workspaces, Cleaning & Facility Related Questions

### 5.1 Will the city be making modifications to city workspaces – like higher baffles and plexiglass barriers – to ensure separation of staff in office settings?

**Last update: June 15, 2020**

A decision was made by SLT to maintain the standard workstation sizes of 6 feet by 8 feet with baffle heights of 51-inches. There may be locations or workspaces, such as public counters, where additional physical barriers are required. The City is taking a centralized approach to modifications of service counters.

We will continue to use the hierarchy of controls to make decisions on the modifications needed to the workplace. A corporate [Standard Operating Procedure for Facility Modifications](#) is in place.

### 5.2 What is the City doing about air quality in office space when we return? Are there any concerns about HVAC filtration as it relates to COVID?

**Last update: June 15**

Facilities Management will be following standards and best practices from government health agencies, as well as industry leading professional institutions such as the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), along with following the equipment manufacturer's recommended maintenance protocols.

The purpose is to follow industry best and reasonable practices to establish operating standards, regular HVAC inspection and maintenance requirements that preserve a system's ability to achieve acceptable thermal comfort, energy efficiency, and indoor air quality in city-owned buildings, in addition to city-leased spaces that provide reassurance to all stakeholders.

### 5.3 Some stairwells are quite narrow, like those in City Hall. How will these be managed?

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The Facilities team has assessed elevators, stairs and hallways to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained. Signage will be placed in these areas to guide traffic. Some stairways

will be made one way and number of people in elevators will be limited.

#### **5.4 Will additional resources be employed at the larger office settings to manage the cleaning of high touch surfaces?**

**Last update: June 15, 2020**

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) [“Pandemic Response –Environmental Cleaning for Workspaces –COH-P-005”](#) has been developed to ensure adequate cleaning frequency and appropriate products are used. This SOP ensures a consistent standard will be followed by both staff and third-party cleaners.

#### **5.5 The City’s health and safety requirements specify that meeting rooms should be set up prior to a meeting. Who is responsible for this?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The Facilities Management Team will initially set up meeting room furniture with reduced capacity seating. It will be the responsibility of the key contact reserving the room to set up the space according to their meeting type on an ongoing basis. The exception will be for meeting rooms in City Hall. The notes about cleaning can remain.

The Facilities Management team will ensure cleaning of the rooms consistent with the standard operating procedure for cleaning standards. Ongoing cleaning of the meeting rooms between use may be the responsibility of staff and / or Facilities depending on the meeting room.

#### **5.6 Who is responsible for cleaning shared spaces like lunchrooms and kitchens, and what is the schedule for this cleaning?**

**Last update: June 15, 2020**

The Facilities team is responsible for ensuring cleaning services are provided to common areas such as lunch rooms and kitchens.

Cleaning of these areas will occur at least twice a day and more frequently as may be determined necessary at each individual location.

## 6. Hamilton@Work: Flexible Work Models

### 6.1 When can staff currently working from home expect to be able to return to the office environment?

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The Senior Leadership Team and the Emergency Operations Centre has announced that wherever possible, staff will continue working from home until further notice.

[Hamilton@Work](#) outlines the City's plan for how and where our employees will work going forward. It is a tailored approach for the City of Hamilton that is aligned with our commitment to be an inclusive, empowering and equitable employer. Hamilton@Work considers new ways of working, a changed work culture, how and where our employees are most productive, ongoing health and safety factors, evolved business needs, and the environmental advantages available to us by encouraging our workforce to carry on in the new and different ways we have been working through the pandemic. Senior Leadership Team has committed to providing staff with at least four weeks' notice on their return timing, wherever possible.

There are some exceptions for staff who need to be physically in the office to support the delivery of public facing services or for those who need to visit the office to accommodate their work (e.g. they need access to drawings or archived files, etc.).

If an employee feels that they need to attend the physical work location (even for a brief visit to pick up supplies, etc.), they are to contact their immediate supervisor to determine whether re-entry into the workplace is permitted and to determine a way to do so safely. All staff must complete their [health screening](#) prior to entering the work location.

### 6.2 Will employees have a choice in which work model they will be a part of? What if someone doesn't agree with the work model their leader wants them to be in?

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

A discussion between the Manager/Supervisor and the employee(s) with consideration being given to all input provided, along with validating pertinent information about the job is an important part of the

Decision Criteria process. However the final decision will be with an employees' immediate Manager/Supervisor who is required to completed the "Decision Criteria" worksheet in [Hamilton@Work](#) (Appendix A) and make the final determination, with approval from their next level Manager/Director.

### **6.3 Will the City contribute to any home office expenses staff incur by working from home over the long term?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Your Department or Division is not obligated to incur additional costs to support continued working from home. Should assets be available, such as extra monitors or office chairs, then providing these to employees working from home is at the discretion of the Manager/Supervisor. However there is no requirement to provide extra assets to set up home offices. Decisions to do so will be based on budgetary considerations.

### **6.4 How will people who work remotely connect to meetings that are being held in the office? Will there always be an option and technology available to join virtually?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Existing technology and tools will still be available (Webex/Jabber/VPN) for those who are currently working from home. For those individuals who will be new to working from home, requirements for hardware, equipment and additional licenses will need to be reviewed by leadership. Facilities will be provisioning some meeting rooms with teleconferencing technology to allow participants to join virtually.

### **6.5 If you had been accommodated in the office with special equipment, such as chairs, sit-stands, etc., can this equipment be brought home for the long term?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

The City will accommodate employees with existing medical conditions by assisting staff in setting up their home workstations to meet their physical restrictions and limitations. If needed, arrangement will be made to transfer any special equipment from the office to the employee's home. More information

is covered in the [Telecommuting Equipment, Resource, and Workspace Set up Procedure – COVID 19](#).

## 6.6 What do I do if I need ergonomic support for my working at home set up?

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Home employees are encouraged to review the [Working from Home: Ergonomics for Your Body and Mind](#) document for tips on how to ensure that your home work location is set up well to enable you to have a healthy and productive work day.

If employees find that their equipment is not supportive after following the ergonomic tip sheet, they should speak to their supervisor and contact Health, Safety and Wellness (HSW). HSW will provide employees with a link to a Self-Assessment Tool (ROSA) which will provide additional recommendations for supportive set up.

If employees need additional supports, equipment or require specific accommodations according to medical directives to work safely from home, employees should speak with their supervisor and Health, Safety and Wellness about their options.

## 6.7 Has the City considered creating any programs to support employees who may need or want to purchase office equipment for their home? For example, partnering with a vendor to offer an employee discount, or maybe a purchasing loan?

**Last update: June 29, 2020**

At this time, we are not considering any programs to offer financial support for staff to purchase home office or related equipment. We may reconsider this as things evolve, as necessary.



## **6.8 If assigned to work from home, can I work remotely outside of Ontario or Canada?**

**Last update: January 11, 2021**

Remote work locations outside of the country or province will not be approved unless there are extenuating circumstances which would require approval by the Emergency Operations Centre. If you have concerns about working from home, please contact your leader.

## **6.9 If assigned to work from home, can I work from an alternate location (in Ontario) like my cottage or trailer?**

**Last update: June 11, 2021**

Employees currently assigned to work from home, may be able to work from an alternate location in Ontario. If staff have a safe work environment and the proper, reliable infrastructure to support their work such as network access, and are able to do the work as required, they can work at an alternate location in Ontario such as a cottage or trailer. A change to your remote work location must be approved by your leader to ensure you are able to meet all the requirements of your job from the alternate location. The discussion should include procedures and responsibilities, including performance expectations, as well as protocols if you are required to attend another workplace or you are unable to connect remotely due to equipment or service failure. It is important that while working remotely, you are still following all public health guidelines.

## **6.10 Due to COVID 19 I have been assigned to work from home and need to purchase office supplies such as printer paper and ink cartridges. Will I be reimbursed for these purchases, and what is the process that I am required to follow to get reimbursement?**

**Last update: June 29, 2020**

At this time, prior to purchasing any office supplies to support working from home, employees must get emailed approval from their supervisor. Once approved, employees can purchase items from any vendor that they have access to, such as Walmart, Amazon, Loblaws Superstore, and BestBuy.

To be reimbursed for the purchase, employees must complete a Mileage & Other Expenses form, attach a copy of the emailed approval and store receipt to the form (receipt must include an itemized

list of items purchased), and email completed form, with all attachments, to your Manager or Supervisor who will submit the form to Finance & Administration staff.

More information is available in the resource [Office Supplies for employees during COVID-19 event.](#)

### **6.11 As an employee who is currently working from home, will I be compensated for travel to the physical work location if I am called in or required to be at my normal work location?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

At this time, employees who are working from home as a result of COVID-19 are doing so on a temporary basis, and as such, their home location is not considered to be their normal/primary work location. An employee's primary work location continues to be their City work location. Employees are not compensated for mileage for their drive to their work location, nor are employees compensated for their travel time. Compensation for mileage is granted for mileage that is incurred for legitimate business purposes over and above the expected mileage to their workplace.

### **6.12 What options does someone have if they are uncomfortable returning to work but have been recalled to the office?**

**Last update: July 27, 2020**

There have been many health and safety measures that have been put in place to ensure employees are able to safely return to the workplace. For example, health screening, increased cleaning and disinfection, staggering of employees in the workplace, limited number of staff in certain areas, and more.

If you are still uncomfortable and alternate arrangements can't be made with your leader, you may be able to use vacation, lieu time, or take an unpaid leave. Connect with your supervisor or email [askHR@hamilton.ca](mailto:askHR@hamilton.ca) for clarity around your personal circumstances.

## 6.13 How's the City managing vacation carry-over into 2022?

Last update: October 20, 2021

General Managers will have the authority to approve vacation carry-over into 2022 up to a maximum of 10 days for any vacation entitlement earned in 2021. Any consideration beyond 10 working days will be extremely rare and under exceptional circumstances:

- Any carry-over days from 2021 must be taken no later than June 30, 2022.
- All 2021 vacation entitlement must be taken by December 31, 2022.
- Any consideration for carry-over from the 2021 vacation entitlement must be subject to operational requirements, and must be either directly or indirectly related to COVID-19
- Will continue to be subject to the carry-over provisions provided for in applicable policies
- Vacation entitlement and scheduling for unionized employees remain in accordance with the respective collective agreements.
- Any consideration beyond the 10 working days will be extremely rare and under exceptional circumstances and will have to be approved by the City Manager.

## 7. Leadership Focused Questions

### 7.1 As a Leader, what am I expected to do to support employees in receiving their vaccines?

Last update: September 2, 2021

Leaders are expected to provide flexibility for employees and allow for time away during the workday to receive their vaccination if needed. While employees are expected to try to schedule vaccines appointments at the start/end of shift or in break times, this might not always be possible and we need to be flexible in allowing employees to take time to get a vaccination.

## **7.2 Leaders are responsible for employee's productivity. How do they ensure employees are completing their work while working remotely?**

**Last update: June 29, 2020**

Leaders are responsible to set up work expectations, work assignments and duties. Leaders need to put a system in place so that they are informed about what work tasks employees are completing so they can manage the workload of the team. For example, a Leader may choose to have all employees email their work plan either on a daily or weekly basis or they may choose to have a shared document that all employees track their tasks. It does not have to be an extensive tracking document depending on the type of work being done, but it should identify what work is being done. Leaders are additionally accountable for ensure that the PAD process is continued regardless of the employee's physical work location. Leaders should be checking in on employees to get status updates; completing mid-year check ins, and documenting updates within the electronic PAD throughout the year.

## **7.3 How often should leaders check in with employees who are working from home?**

**Last update: October 15, 2021**

Leaders should be checking in with employees on a regular basis and should make themselves available to employees should any questions or concerns arise. As a best practice, leaders should follow the same check in schedule that they maintained in the physical workplace, and additionally should articulate communication expectations with employees. Leaders are responsible to set the expectations for frequency and mode of communication with their teams.

## **7.4 Will staff be permitted to attend mandatory or non-mandatory training events?**

**Last update: October 20, 2020**

As a reminder, while in-person gatherings are permitted under current provincial restrictions (for a maximum of 25 people indoors and 100 people outdoors), at this time City staff are strongly encouraged to continue meeting virtually where possible. The situation in our community continues to be quite serious. As we work to increase vaccination rates, it's important to continue to limit your number of close contacts so we can limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

**Training, Conferences & Professional Association Meetings**

Staff should not attend any in-person non-mandatory training, conferences or professional association meetings at this time. These events can be attended virtually only. Mandatory training can continue in-person if required, and staff no longer require approval from the Emergency Operations Centre to attend. In-person mandatory training can be approved at the Director level.

**Division Days or Employee Recognition Events**

No in-person Division Day or Employee Recognition Events should occur. The exception to this is for drive-thru events for employees who already report to a physical work location regularly.

**Events organized by the Mayor or Members of Council**

Staff are able to attend outdoor public events for City business if they are invited by the Mayor or members of Council or by community partners, and if proper public health protocols are in place. However, please work to keep the number of staff attending events to a minimum, wherever possible.