



### **Updated Guidance for Masking and Eye Protection on Jobsites – May 10, 2021**

The Ministry of Health has recently provided new information on the risk of COVID-19 Variants of Concern transmission through the eyes. In response, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) through the risk-assessment requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, has revised the jobsite guidance for mask wearing and eye protection with the below updates.

- Working within 2-metres (indoors and outdoors) now requires eye protection AND an appropriate mask AT ALL TIMES.
- Mask selection, either PPE or source control masking, must be selected based on the projects/workplace risk assessment. This may require moving from a cloth mask/face covering to a surgical or procedure mask but not necessarily an N95 unless required by the construction activity. Employers and workers need to determine what is the right mask under the circumstances where people are working within 2-metres of each other.
- Eye protection would include goggles, safety glasses, prescription glasses with side shields that are tight fitting and should also be selected based on the risk assessment. For example, if eye-protection is required to reduce the transmission of COVID but also if the construction activity requires so, such as in demolition activities, then eye protection would need to satisfy both requirements.

Members should ensure these new protocols are known and implemented on jobsites. If members receive an MOL Order for non-compliance related to this updated guidance please review the [IHSA website](#) and [guidance document](#) for more direction. MOL Summons for non-compliance can be issued under the [Duties of an Employer Section 25.2.H of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990](#).

Why is it important to update your PPE requirements? To reduce the risk of transmission and possible local public health orders to self-isolate for 14 days. If a positive COVID case is reported at your jobsite, the local public health unit will investigate and determine the exposure risk the COVID positive individual had in relation to other workers on the site. Updating your PPE requirements to the new guidance on eye protection and masking could support the local public health unit in determining that other workers in contact with the positive COVID contact are not at risk of transmission, and do not need to isolate for 14 days. If on the other hand, the local public health units determines that the lack of eye protection and proper masking related to close contact interaction increases the risk of transmission to other workers, they may determine that those workers must isolate for 14 days.

We need to work safer than ever in order to keep each other safe. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.