

Dear members,

During this challenging time, I want to thank you for your ongoing steadfast resolve, your passion for our sector and your commitment to health and safety. Our industry continues to face supply chain, material and labour challenges, yet despite that, members are continuing the vital work of keeping our jobsites safe and healthy while delivering the keys to a new or newly renovated home to awaiting families.

Following the January 3rd announcement from the Provincial Government, [the province is returning to Step 2 of the reopening framework](#) effective Wednesday, January 5th at 12:01 AM. Importantly, residential construction work may continue, however members should be aware of the following measures which may impact your operations,

Remote work

- Each person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall ensure that any person who performs work for the business or organization conducts their work remotely, unless the nature of their work requires them to be on site at the workplace. This applies to corporate offices and staff who can work remotely.

Capacity Limits

- Limited to the lesser of 50% capacity or the number of people that can maintain physical distancing of 2 metres indoors. This applies to indoor workplaces such as décor centres and sales centres.
- Real estate open houses are by appointment only. Open houses are not permitted.

Tarion

- Builder repair periods will be extended for 21 days to align with the guidance that everyone work from home as much as possible. This extension does not apply to emergency issues which must be addressed as soon as possible.
- Conciliations scheduled during the next 21 days will proceed but will be conducted virtually wherever possible. If they must proceed in person, all health and safety protocols will be observed.
- Chargeability determinations will continue to be made at the time of conciliation.
- Given the present health circumstances, Tarion does not consider it absolutely necessary that the PDI occur prior to a closing in the presence of both the builder and the homeowner.

As always, members should be aware of the following health and safety measures and guidance.

Instructions from Public Health Officers

- Businesses and organizations must comply with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including related to physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting and screening.
- Businesses and organizations must comply with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials related to COVID 19 vaccination policies.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Equipment, washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers must be cleaned and disinfected.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Personal protective equipment for the eyes, nose and mouth is required for workers if they are required to come within 2 metres of a person who is not wearing a face covering or mask indoors and are not separated by a barrier.

Face Coverings and Masks

- Any person in an indoor area of a business or organization or a vehicle that is a part of the business or organization must wear a mask or face covering that covers their mouth, nose or chin, with limited exceptions.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Plans & Jobsite Guidance

- Safety plans must be prepared, posted in a conspicuous location, and made available upon request. The provincial government has a [COVID-19 safety plan builder](#) to help employers with this.
- As a reminder, the Ontario government website has guidance for [construction site health and safety](#). In addition, ensure that any office spaces are also compliant with [public health and workplace safety measures](#).

Screening

- [Active screening](#) of workers required.
- [Passive screening](#) of patrons required (i.e., posting signs at all entrances in a conspicuous location that informs individuals on how to screen themselves for COVID 19 prior to entry).
- [Active screening](#) of patrons required in certain settings.

Requirements when workers eat or drink

- Physical distancing or a barrier is required indoors when workers remove face coverings to eat or drink.

COVID-19 Help for Employers

- Please find linked [here](#) further provincial resources and information to help employers navigate government supports and services for addressing COVID-19.

Worker Income Protection Program

- Members should also be aware of that the provincial government has extended its Worker Income Protection Benefit program, which provides paid sick days, until July 31, 2022. The full website on the Worker Income Protection Benefit Program can be found [here](#) with all relevant details which members should review.
- Members can find the portal [here](#) for submitting a claim for reimbursement. A reminder that employers are entitled to be reimbursed the amount of infectious disease emergency leave pay that they paid to their employees, up to \$200 per employee per day taken, with a maximum of 3 days per employee.

As we navigate this return to Step 2 of the reopening plan, the province will be enhancing jobsite health and safety enforcement actions and therefore members can, and should, expect increased enforcement for on-site protocols. The industry's designation as an essential workplace throughout previous COVID-19 waves was predicated on our industry's collective strong adherence to safety requirements. We must continue working together to keep each other safe and keep our industry running. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to your local EO and/or [OHBA](#) with any questions.

Best regards,

Bob Schickedanz
OHBA President