



# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	June 11, 2020
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	CAOR-CW-08-20
<b>Title:</b>	Organizational Strategy for Returning People to the Workplace
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented; Endorsed by Council June 25, 2020 per Resolution CC61-20;

## Recommendation

1. That Report CAOR-CW-08-20 Organizational Strategy for Returning People to the Workplace be received; and
2. That staff be directed to take the necessary steps to comply with the provincial guidelines for workplaces including continuing with remote work, taking steps to ensure physical distancing, providing enhanced cleaning, providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), creating appropriate policies and procedures and other actions deemed necessary.

## Executive Summary

Planning for the re-opening of Grey County's administrative building and Grey Roots Museum will take a phased approach, following the expert guidance of the province and the Grey Bruce Medical Officer of Health. Protective measures are expected to be required for the foreseeable future and staff are working collaboratively to design policies and procedures for a new way of operating that provides the services the public needs and expects while taking all necessary health and safety precautions.

## Background and Discussion

The Grey County Administration Building (including the Provincial Offences Court), as well as Grey Roots Museum and Archives have been closed to the public since March 23, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial emergency declaration. Most staff who regularly work in those locations have been working from home or redeployed to other areas. The emergency declarations provincially and within Grey County remain in effect and the province continues to see new infections daily. The economy is re-opening slowly. In the absence of a vaccine or other preventative treatment for COVID 19, consideration must be given to meeting the public's need for services while returning staff to work safely.

Overall, the transition to a primarily work from home service delivery model in March went extremely well. Investments in enhancements to the IT infrastructure in recent years and the excellent efforts of IT staff played a critical role in getting people moved and functioning from home very quickly. Except for POA Court operations which remain closed by the province to July 6<sup>th</sup>, service to clients and back office administration has continued without interruption. New or enhanced services have been initiated to support vulnerable populations and to support electronic service delivery. There have been no outages or complaints from the public.

The county senior management team, facilities and HR staff are working together to develop a reopening strategy that provides consistent infection prevention strategies and is responsive to the operating requirements that are unique to each department.

It is important for safety, morale and productivity that Grey County staff know what is expected of them and what measures the County is taking to protect them. To begin that conversation, the 171 staff in administration and Grey Roots were surveyed to get an understanding of their perspectives on return to work.

Key themes from the survey responses were:

- 75% of staff report feeling very productive working from home
- 70% have significant concerns about returning to the office without changes being made
- Most would be comfortable to return if safety issues addressed:
  - Establishing and enforcing physical distancing, maintaining building occupancy at a safe level
  - Interacting with the public safely, keeping washrooms and public areas sanitized and at safe occupancy levels
  - Shared equipment and spaces, i.e. copiers, coffee machines, door handles

- Adequacy of ventilation system to provide fresh air, especially in the winter
- Enforcing requirements to stay out of the office if unwell, concern about running out of sick days
- Without childcare some can't come back full-time
- Some staff don't have laptops and can't go back and forth between office and home without alternative arrangements.

## Reopening Phases

Staff propose reopening the administration building and Grey Roots in phases, aligned with the provincial reopening strategy and the direction of the Medical Officer of Health. Advice from these experts will govern how quickly we move through the phases and what precautions must remain in place as long as COVID-19 remains a threat.

## Infection Prevention – Hierarchy of Controls

Throughout the reopening phases, we will be mindful of the hierarchy of controls.

1. ELIMINATE EXPOSURE
  - a. Physical distancing by maintaining at least two metres of physical distance is most important and will be instituted wherever possible.
  - b. Adjusting the Workplace - Engineering controls by redesigning or modifying spaces to enable physical distancing, e.g. moving desks or leaving space between vacant, staff working in shifts or staggered schedules.
  - c. Adjusting Processes - Administrative Controls- Implementing health screening or educating workers about hand hygiene practices.
2. MANAGE EXPOSURE
  - a. Use PPE where previous measures are not possible or effective.

### Current – Isolation & Lockdown

- **Building Closed to Public**
- **Staff:** All work that can be done remotely is done from home
  - For work that cannot be completed remotely, Departments arrange for work schedule that minimizes interaction and time in the office
  - No gatherings permitted. Common areas are closed.
  - Strict Physical Distancing in place
- **Facilities:** Bathroom access are limited to maintain strict cleaning practices.

## Stage 1 – Anticipated to begin July

- **Building remains Closed to Public**
- **Staff: Begin re-integrating on rotating schedule;** work from home still prioritized
  - **Employee Self-Screening** in place via IT
  - **Strict Physical Distancing** to be followed to maintain 6 feet apart; directional markers in higher-traffic non-office spaces to assist with flow.
  - **PPE protocols** in place – wear masks or utilize barriers (plexiglass, etc.) whenever cannot maintain 6 ft distance
  - **Personal hygiene** practices strictly followed – washing hands, do not touch your face, etc.
    - Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be in each quadrant area.
  - **Gathering** – one remotely when possible.
  - **Remain in department quadrant as much as possible.** Utilize specific quadrant entry/exit, etc..
- **Common Spaces:**
  - Common spaces are closed or restricted
- **Facilities:**
  - **Facilities Cleaning** -Enhanced cleaning measures for bathrooms and high-touch areas
    - Where possible, doorways will be propped open to reduce contact.
  - **Department & Personal Cleaning** - Staff required to clean their own desk space and departments required to clean departmental areas such as counters, tables, etc. Facilities to provide supplies.
  - **Shared equipment** should be avoided
    - Where not possible (printers), disinfecting should take place between each use.
    - Paperless processes should be prioritized and implemented as much as possible.
  - **Deliveries & Packages** - Restricted access and cooling off periods followed
  - **HVAC** circulation and filtering enhanced
- **Communications:**
  - Staff to notify supervisors re: illness immediately; before coming to work
  - Building communications, posters, signage and education re: safe practices, closed areas, etc.

## Stage 2 – Fall 2020 TBD

- **Building Open to Public by Appointment**
  - Active screening protocols in place – central entrance

- Restricting # of people in the building – waiting areas adjusted for physical distancing.
- Directional lining and physical distancing decals in place throughout the building.
- Kiosks remain closed.
- Protocols in place for handling payments and other drop offs.
- **Staff:**
  - on rotating schedule based on appointments; work from home is still integrated practice to promote physical distancing.
  - Safety protocols to stop the spread - same as Stage 1
- **Common Spaces:**
  - Common spaces area assessed for re-opening with strict protocols
    - Bathroom availability is expanded but still limited
- **Facilities:**
  - Safety protocols to stop the spread - same as Stage 1
- **Communications:**
  - Continue with Stage 1 protocols

### Stage 3 – date TBD

- **Building Open to Public** with screening protocols in place
- **Staff** in the building on more regular basis.
  - Safety protocols to stop the spread - same as Stage 1
- **Common Spaces:**
  - Common spaces area assessed for further re-opening with strict protocols (ex. Lunchroom with strict hand hygiene and cleaning)
    - Bathroom availability is no longer limited
  - Follow Public Health Unit capacity guidelines re: small gatherings in large spaces that allows for physical distancing protocols

## Guidance and Policies under development

COVID-19 Stopping the Spread at Work

Working from Home Policy

COVID Infection Control in Office Settings Policy

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

[Province -EMCPA](#)

[Grey Bruce Public Health Unit](#)

[MAG direction to Court](#)

## Financial and Resource Implications

Finance is tracking COVID related expenditures. Long term care has received additional funding to partially offset expenditures.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal (list)
- External Grey Bruce Public Health Unit

## Appendices and Attachments

### **Best practice documentation consulted**

[GBPHU-Public Health Criteria for Businesses, Employers and Facilities for Ontario's Restart Phase: A Tool for Municipal Partners](#)

[KPMG – COVID-19: Return to the workplace, A guide for employers](#)

[Gallagher – Protecting Workplace Culture during a global pandemic](#)

[Marsh \(our insurer\) – Considerations for re-opening facilities closed during a pandemic, Returning People to the Workplace Safely](#)

[International Facilities Management Association - Returning to the Workplace](#)

[Public Services Health and Safety Association – Health and Safety Guidance for Employers of Office Settings](#)