

POLICY NO. 7.011: All MNO: Use of Office Space During COVID 19 and Prevention of COVID 19 in the Workplace

Revision Date: 2020/06/25

Scope

This policy applies to all Métis Nation of Ontario employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario who access or share office space with employees.

Policies and procedures related to return to office are subject to change to align with provincial and federal government guidance and public health recommendations. Any changes to this policy and procedures will be made in writing and communicated.

Policy

The Métis Nation of Ontario expects employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario to model a health and safety culture and to follow all protocols in place to support a healthy and safe workplace.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility. If employees or volunteers are concerned about non-compliance with health and safety policies and procedures related to COVID-19, they are encouraged to speak up and state their concerns. If speaking up is not effective in changing behaviour, employees are asked to remove themselves from the situation and contact their People Leader or Human Resources.

Council Members, other elected official or volunteers are encouraged to contact Community Relations.

Procedures

In order to safely return to the office, the Métis Nation of Ontario has established a Planning Team comprised of H&S representatives and others. The Planning Team has established precautionary measures based on advice from applicable governmental bodies and public health authorities to reduce the spread of the COVID-19.

This Policy outlines the procedures for a safe, voluntary return to working or volunteering in MNO office space, including the procedures for training, use of shared office space, personal protective equipment, cleaning and disinfecting, hand washing and respiratory etiquette, self-monitoring, travel, prevention of harassment and discrimination related to infectious diseases, and employee and volunteer privacy.

Training

Under Occupational Health and Safety, employees are required to know about the risks and hazards in the workplace. All employees must complete COVID-19 Employee Health and Safety Training on HR Downloads to ensure that they are aware of the risks and hazards in the workplace.

Community Councils and volunteers are encouraged to complete this training but it is not mandatory. To enroll in this training, please email humanresources@metisnation.org

The course will cover:

1. Safe and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
2. Administrative controls used to prevent exposure to COVID-19 including physical distancing, hand washing and surface cleaning
3. Contact tracing
4. Symptoms of mental health and supports for employees

Use of Shared Office Space

Employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario are expected to follow all signage related to entering or using shared office space.

Shared office spaces will be adapted to support the two meters/ six feet physical distancing requirement. Employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario must respect physical distancing requirements and procedures that will be established for scheduling / booking of shared office space.

If physical distancing of two meters/ six feet cannot be maintained, due to capacity and configuration of shared office space, employees will be asked to limit their attendance at the office to two days a week to allow for other employees and volunteers to use the office as needed. Employees will be asked to use Outlook Calendars to coordinate office attendance.

Client visits and public drop-ins continue to be restricted until a re-assessment can be made in September 2020.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In situations where employees or volunteers are unable to maintain physical distancing of two meters/ six feet PPE (non-medical masks) must be worn.

If a landlord or property management firm requires the use of PPE in common areas, such as lobbies and elevators, employees and volunteers must comply with all requirements.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Maintaining a clean environment is integral to the safety of employees and clients and is a top priority at the Métis Nation of Ontario.

The following steps are to be followed:

- Clean visibly soiled surfaces before disinfecting
- Wear appropriate gloves when in contact with chemical solutions, and where specified by the manufacturer
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe and proper application of cleaning and disinfecting products

During voluntary return to work, employees will be asked to ensure daily disinfecting of surfaces and objects that they touch often. Items that require daily disinfecting include, but are not limited to:

- Desks and tables
- Chair arms and backs
- Kitchen appliances and countertops
- Door handles
- Faucet handles
- Computer keyboards
- Phones
- Photocopier /printer displays
- Other common surfaces

Employees and volunteers will be responsible for disinfecting, with a Lysol wipe or paper towel and disinfecting spray, any items that they touch, after they touch them, each time they touch them.

Each office will have unique cleaning requirements.

- Please look into the leasing agreement if your office has a dedicated cleaning service for daily cleaning of washrooms and common spaces
- Offices without dedicated cleaning services should be brought to the attention of humanresources@metisnation.org

In the event of someone using the shared office space in the 72 hours prior to testing positive for COVID-19, enhanced cleaning protocols must be followed.

- Close off the area used by the sick person
- Close the office if the space used by the sick person cannot be closed off
- Inform your People Leader, contact the assigned Director, and follow all office closure protocols
- Office closures will be communicated to the local Council and Regional Councillor
- Advise Human Resources at humanresources@metisnation.org
- [Community Councils or other volunteers advise Community Relations \(GlenL@metisnation.org\)](#)
- Wait a minimum of 24-48 hours before disinfecting the space

Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette

All employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario must follow the hand hygiene and respiratory requirements at all times when using shared office spaces.

- Wash, rinse, and dry hands using soap and hot water or apply an alcohol hand rub:
 - before entering the shared office space work
 - after using the washroom
 - frequently throughout the day
 - after contact with common surfaces, and
 - before leaving work
- Avoidance measures that minimize contact with droplets when coughing or sneezing, including:
 - Remaining home if sick
 - Wearing a mask
 - Turning your head away from others
 - Covering your nose and mouth a clean tissue or sneezing / coughing into your elbow
 - Immediately disposing of tissues after use
 - Washing your hands with soap or using hand sanitizer after disposal of tissues
 - Maintaining a two meters/ six feet distance from others at all times

Self-Monitoring

All employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario are required to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.

If an employee identifies that they have developed symptoms similar to those of COVID-19, they are to immediately notify their People Leader and remove themselves from the shared office space with the least possible amount of physical contact with other employees. If symptoms develop, stay home and self-monitor. Employees are required to advise their People Leader of their intent to work remotely or use sick time as needed.

If Community Council member or other volunteer working in an MNO office identify that they have developed symptoms similar to those of COVID-19, they are to immediately notify Community Relations (glenl@metisnation.org) and remove themselves from the shared office space with the least possible amount of physical contact with other employees.

For purposes of this policy, symptoms similar to COVID-19 can include, but are not limited to:

- Fever

- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose

Once isolated, it is important that the employee cooperates with their People Leader to provide information regarding their exposure to shared office space, other employees, and third parties. This can include:

- Notifying their People Leader where they worked that day
- Disclosing any interactions with fellow employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, or others acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario, or accessing services provided by the Métis Nation of Ontario
- Advising about any equipment they used, items they handled, or surfaces they touched, and
- Any other relevant information

The same requirements exist for members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario who share office space with employees. They should contact Community Relations (glenl@metisnation.org) and humanresources@metisnation.org.

People Leader Responsibilities

If an employee or volunteer reports that they have symptoms similar to COVID-19 it is important to take all reasonable measures to isolate the employee and make them feel at ease regarding the situation.

Placing the Individual at Ease

Do not presume when an individual feels unwell that they have COVID-19. Communicate to the employee that all necessary precautions are to be taken to ensure that any potential risk is mitigated.

Offer the individual resources to ensure they feel comfortable disclosing information required to properly assess the risk of possible exposure to others.

Make the individual aware of their rights to privacy and that they are not required to disclose any medical or personal information not relevant to determining possible exposure to others.

Isolating the Individual

Request that the individual move to an area where they will have no or limited physical contact with others (a minimum of two meters/ six feet from others). Where possible, use teleconferencing equipment or physical barriers when communicating with the individual.

Assessing Symptoms and Determining Possible Exposure

Once the individual is safely isolated, assess any symptoms he or she has experienced and determine when they first experienced such symptoms. Figure out how long the individual worked at the office with the symptoms or whether there are any other additional factors which could explain the symptoms, such as failing to take medication for another condition, or seasonal allergies.

Make the individual aware of their rights to privacy and advise them that their privacy will be protected as far as possible.

Have the individual provide as much information as available to determine the possible exposure to employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, and other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario who share office space:

- Whom the individual associates with at the office
- Whom the individual associates with on breaks
- Any workstations and equipment the individual uses
- Any common areas the individual visits, including washrooms and break areas
- Any third parties the individual interacts with, including clients, suppliers, and visitors
- Any areas the individual visited outside their normal scope of work

Helping the Individual Leave the office

If the individual drove themselves to the office, the People Leader or appropriate MNO staff is to immediately instruct them go home and self-isolate. If the individual took public transport, either their emergency contact or the local public health authority or non-emergency services should be contacted to ensure that the employee is safely returned home.

Individuals are not to return to MNO offices until a public health authority advises it is safe to do so. The quarantine period will likely last a minimum of 14 days.

Additional Measures

If an employee, member of a Community Council or other elected official, or other person acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario who has been in a shared office space notifies the Métis Nation of Ontario of a positive test for COVID-19, it is important to gather the same information as with suspected symptoms.

Regardless of whether the person is an employee, member of Community Council or other elected official, or another person acting on behalf of the Métis

Nation of Ontario, they are to self-isolate and follow the guidelines provided by the relevant public health authorities. They must contact their People Leader or humanresources@metisnation.org before returning to shared office space.

Upon notification of a positive test for COVID-19, the Métis Nation of Ontario, as an employer, will:

- Ensure that MNO conducts a risk assessment of the possible exposure of other employees, and third parties to the affected person
- Communicate the risk to any person identified as possibly exposed and encourage them to take precautions to protect themselves and others while self-monitoring for symptoms
- Provide information and support to affected or possibly affected employees during periods of self-isolation
- Ensure that any shared office space be closed off for enhanced cleaning
- Determine whether a complete closure of the shared office space is required for enhanced cleaning
- Review policies, procedures, and protocols in place to determine whether there are any improvements that can be implemented to better mitigate against future risks
- Report any confirmed cases to the relevant public health department for further investigation

Travel

Travel during a global pandemic may present an increased risk of infection and facilitate the spread of illness. In acknowledgement of this risk, and to protect the health and safety of our employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, or other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Métis Nation of Ontario has established this policy regarding travel during a pandemic.

Non-essential Business Travel

The Métis Nation of Ontario has suspended all non-essential business travel to in order to protect the health and safety of employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, or other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Meetings normally requiring travel will be conducted over the phone, or using videoconferencing, or rescheduled to a later date. The Métis Nation of Ontario will continually monitor the pandemic situation and re-evaluate business travel plans as needed.

Personal Travel

The Métis Nation of Ontario strongly advises employees to avoid personal travel out of province during a pandemic. However, the Métis Nation of Ontario acknowledges that employees may need to travel for personal reasons during a pandemic. If an employee chooses to travel out of province during the pandemic, they are encouraged to disclose the travel to their People Leader.

Restrictions on using Shared Office Space

In the interest of protecting the health and safety of all employees and volunteers, the Métis Nation of Ontario may implement restrictions on using shared office spaces for employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, or other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario, who have travelled, as well as for those who experience symptoms consistent with COVID-19, whether or not they have travelled. Employees restricted from entering shared office spaces will be able to work remotely, depending on operational needs, or may use paid sick time, if accrued, or unpaid leave, if symptoms prevent them from working.

Voluntary Self-Quarantine

Employees, members of Community Councils or other elected officials, or other persons acting on behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario who travel, whether for personal or MNO related reasons, as well as those who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19, whether or not they have travelled, are required to stay home and not work or visit at MNO offices.

Other

The Métis Nation of Ontario reserves the right to make exceptions to the paid-time off policies in order to adequately address conditions for affected employees. This may involve granting additional leave and providing supports and services outside of those normally available to employees.

The Métis Nation of Ontario will ensure that any exceptions to accepted practice and policy are in line with applicable legislation and employment obligations, and that the guiding principle for the exceptions is the protection of the health and wellness of the Métis Nation of Ontario's employees, their families, and our communities.

Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination

The Métis Nation of Ontario seeks to create an inclusive culture for all employees and volunteers. Policies exist to prevent discrimination and harassment in the workplace and within MNO communities, which includes discrimination and harassment related to exposure to or contracting a disease. Employees who feel subjected to discrimination or harassment should notify their People Leader or Human Resources. Community Council members or other volunteers can contact Community Relations (glenl@metisnation.org) with any concerns.

Protecting Employee and Citizen Privacy

Information related to an employee or Citizen's health or medical status is protected. The Métis Nation of Ontario will balance the need for privacy with the requirements of public health agencies and health and safety legislation in place during the pandemic.