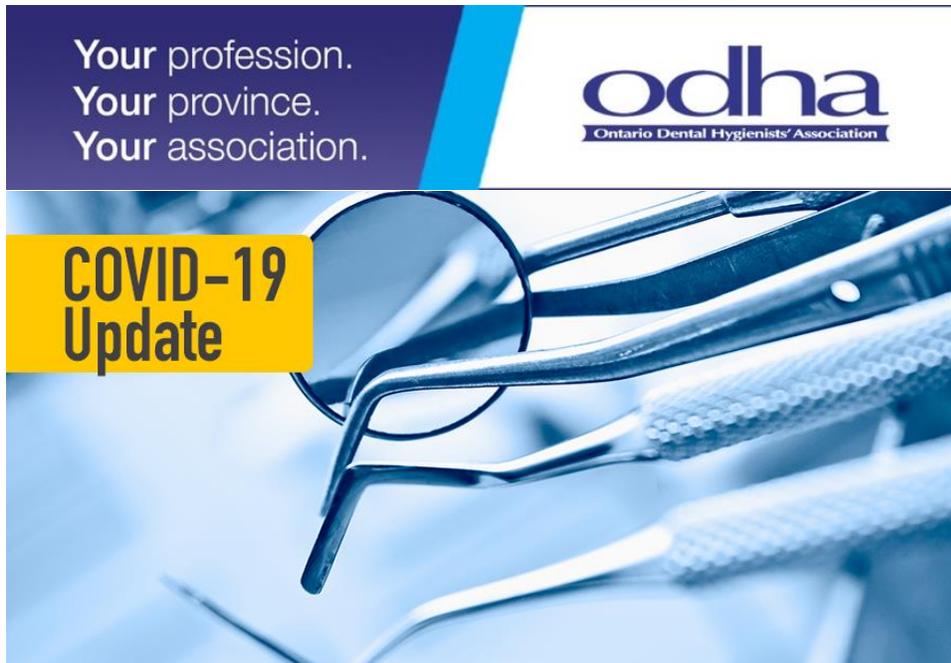


**May 28, 2020 Update**

**SUBJECT:** Directive 2, workplace considerations, liability insurance, and more



First and foremost, ODHA hopes this email communication finds you all healthy. Members have been top-of-mind since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and ODHA staff are committed to providing you with the information you need as it becomes available. With the release of [Directive 2](#) from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, ODHA will strive to answer questions and concerns with the information available to the association as of today, May 28, 2020.

### **Provincial emergency order**

The Ontario government extended all emergency orders in force under s.7.0.2 (4) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* to June 9<sup>th</sup>. These emergency orders include closure of outdoor playgrounds and structures, public swimming pools and outdoor water facilities, and restaurants with the exception of takeout and delivery. There continues to be restrictions on social gatherings of more than five people, and staff redeployment rules remain in place for long-term care homes and congregate settings like retirement homes and women's shelters. This is also the order that closed the ODHA office and keeps it closed with staff working remotely. ODHA is looking forward to returning to the office when permitted to do so.

### **Directive 2**

The changes to [Directive 2](#) from the Chief Medical Officer of Health acknowledge the need to gradually restart health services for the people of Ontario, based on a reduction of COVID-19 activity.

Directive 2 applies to Regulated Health Professionals or persons who operate a Group Practice of Regulated Health Professionals. Key points to note from Directive 2.

- All deferred and non-essential and elective services carried out by health-care providers **may be gradually restarted**, subject to the [requirements](#) outlined in this Directive.
- Health-care providers must comply with the requirements as set out in [COVID-19 Operations Requirements: Health Sector Restart](#) (May 26, 2020 or as current).
- Health-care providers must consider which services should continue to be provided remotely (online, by telephone or other virtual means) and which services can safely resume in-person with appropriate hazard controls and sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE). This should be guided by best clinical evidence.
- Health-care providers must also adhere to the guidance provided by their applicable health regulatory college. Ontario dental hygienists receive this guidance from the [College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario](#).

The release of Directive 2 demonstrates the Ontario government understands the need to gradually open the province's health care system while considering COVID-19 is still a threat. Health-care providers are being trusted to do the right thing and exercise their professional judgement in the provision of care, ensuring compliance with government operational requirements, regulatory requirements, and Public Health Ontario requirements.

### **Important considerations**

**Directive 2 is permissive and not a requirement.** Practices should not open if you can't meet all the requirements.

**Follow all proper procedures, keep all activity well documented, and retain all records.** If a client subsequently tests positive, whether it was related to a dental visit or not, the tracing work undertaken by public health may result in a visit to the practice, including an assessment of practice procedures.

### **Accessing PPE**

Health-care providers should be sourcing PPE through their regular supply chain. PPE allocations from the provincial pandemic stockpile will continue. PPE can also be accessed, within available supply, on an emergency basis through the established escalation process through the Ontario Health Regions. The Ontario government launched a [PPE supplier directory](#) earlier this month. This directory, in addition to many other PPE suppliers are listed on the ODHA website [Return to Practice resource](#).

### **Re-useable Gowns**

Public Health Ontario has provided the following information and resource regarding the laundering of items, including re-useable gowns in health care settings.

1. There are specific requirements in place regarding laundry facilities in health care settings, including dental clinics. See page 69 (80/250) of the [Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings](#).
2. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) CAN/CSA-Z314-18 Canadian medical device reprocessing standard also includes requirements for on-site laundering at health care settings under Section 20: Laundering, maintenance, and preparation of reusable gowns, drapes and wrappers, including the need for

the sorting area for soiled linens to be kept under negative pressure and physically separate from other areas of the laundering area.

3. As these requirements may be challenging to comply with in a dental setting, the use of a third-party commercial laundering service is another option. Household laundry equipment and laundromats would not meet the requirements for laundry in a health care setting, including re-usable gowns.

### **Safe workplaces**

Having open, consistent communication with your employer is crucial. It's an opportunity for you to collaborate together to ensure the safety of clients entering the practice, and a safe workplace for all staff.

It's important to recognize if you find yourself in an unsafe workplace, you may have to take a stand. Always communicate and try resolving any safety concerns with your employer first. If the workplace continues to be unsafe, despite your efforts to voice concerns with your employer, you may want to consider contacting the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO), the Ministry of Labour or Public Health Ontario.

### **Understanding your rights and responsibilities**

ODHA cannot provide members with legal advice. It is important for each member to understand rights and responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Employment Standards Act*, in addition to federal COVID-19 protected leaves.

Piccolo Heath LLP, ODHA's employment legal counsel, continues to update their [blog](#) with new information as it becomes available. Members may be interested in the posts from [May 14](#) and [May 27](#) which are part of a series outlining return-to-work considerations.

Members can also access ODHA's member benefit Legal-Line for free legal advice. With Legal-Line, you can explain your individual situation and receive legal advice specific to your circumstances. You can access your Legal-Line benefit [here](#).

### **Liability insurance**

ODHA continues to work closely with PROLINK, the Association's insurance broker. Together, we are looking at all areas of risk upon return to practise.

The ODHA professional liability (malpractice) insurance policy states members are covered for claims arising out of an error, omission or negligent act in the providing of insured services. Insured services is defined as services provided by the insured (ODHA member), while acting within the scope of the insured's duties as a dental hygienist.

You are strongly encouraged to follow all provincial government and regulatory requirements, standards, guidelines, and recommendations, ensuring all infection, prevention and control protocols are in place to minimize the risk of having a claim against you.

ODHA understands every question or concern may not be addressed in this email, but we will continue to support members and communicate new developments and

information as it becomes available. Please reach out to ODHA by [email](#) – we are here for you. Stay safe and healthy.

*To increase accessibility, COVID-19 email communications will be posted on the [COVID-19 update page](#) on the ODHA website.*