

Ministry of the Attorney  
General

Manager, Court  
Operations  
Court Services Division  
Central West Region

Court House  
45 Main Street East  
Ste 219  
Hamilton ON L8N 2B7

Ministère du Procureur général

Chef de l'administration des  
tribunaux  
Division des services aux tribunaux  
Région du Centre-Ouest

Palais de justice  
45, rue Main, est,  
Ste 219  
Hamilton ON L8N 2B7



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Justice Participants of the John Sopinka Courthouse

*(Note: Please share this memo with relevant staff, justice participants and stakeholders)*

**FROM:** Jennifer Wilder, Manager of Court Operations

**DATE:** **October 28, 2021**

**RE:** **10282021-001 - Health Information Update – John Sopinka Courthouse**

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I am writing to provide health information regarding the John Sopinka Courthouse, 45 Main Street East, Hamilton, Ontario. Today I was informed that a non-OPS individual who visited the building was diagnosed as having a probable case of COVID-19.

This individual was:

- Present in the courthouse on October 26<sup>th</sup>,
- Briefly attended the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and Courtrooms #200 and #306.
- Was not symptomatic while in the courthouse
- Underwent a rapid-antigen COVID-19 test and received a positive result from that test on October 27<sup>th</sup>

This individual was tested because they experienced symptoms compatible with COVID-19.

This individual was physically present in the courthouse during the period of communicability, regarded by the Ministry of Health as the 48 hours preceding either the day of:

- a. The onset of symptoms compatible with COVID-19
- b. In the case of a non-symptomatic person the day the COVID-19 test sample was collected.

The individual has confirmed that they adhered to infection control protocols while in the building, including physical distancing and wearing a surgical/procedural mask/source control

face covering. They are currently self-isolating as per standard public health procedure and following the direction of medical professionals.

At this time, the Ministry has worked with the individual's employer to complete a Preliminary Workplace Exposure Risk Assessment (PWERA) to identify any other persons/individuals in the courthouse that potentially experienced a high-risk exposure to the probable/confirmed positive case. A High-Risk Exposure occurs when a Person/Individual:

- was living in the same household with a probable/confirmed positive case while the case was infectious.
- having direct contact with infectious body fluids of a probable/confirmed positive case (e.g., coughed on or sneezed on)
- having direct physical contact with the probable/confirmed positive case (e.g. hugging, kissing, hand-shaking) that is more than a transient interaction (i.e. brushing by someone, handing paper etc.)
- had close (less than 6ft or 2m), prolonged and/or unprotected interaction\* with a probable/confirmed positive case while both the Person/Individual were not consistently/properly wearing masks.

\*N.B. Interaction means more than a brief, transient encounter (i.e. does not include passing someone in a hallway)

The [Ministry of Health Guidance](#) informs us that Persons/Individuals experiencing a High-Risk Exposure to a probable/confirmed positive case are to self-isolate for 10 days and be tested for COVID-19.

All others not meeting the above criteria are considered Low-Risk Exposures that only require continued self-monitoring for symptoms compatible with COVID-19. If you begin to experience [symptoms compatible with COVID-19](#), you should self-isolate, consult with your health care provider and/or take the Ministry of Health [on-line self-assessment](#) for further information.

As a result of the PWERA process, no potential high-risk exposures related to this case were identified to the Ministry.

For clarity, if you are deemed a potential or confirmed High-Risk Exposure either by way of the preliminary workplace exposure risk assessment process or through a contact tracing process undertaken by Public Health, you will be notified by the ministry or public health and provided with instructions. If you are not contacted, then you are at low-risk of having been exposed to COVID-19 in this case.

In responding to this case, as in all cases of COVID-19, the ministry is relying upon the expertise and guidance of public health officials.

Management has been in contact with the Hamilton Public Health Unit about the specific circumstances of this case and have conveyed the results of the PWERA. Management sought advice from the Hamilton Public Health Unit about any additional precautions that are required by the ministry. They have advised that no further actions need to be taken.

The Hamilton Public Health Unit will take necessary steps to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and will proceed based on the specific circumstances of each individual case. The Hamilton Public Health Unit will conduct any further contact tracing they deem appropriate. The Ministry will provide all necessary assistance to Public Health in this regard if required.

Enhanced cleaning of the building has been in effect since March 2020.

Management will continue to monitor this situation and will provide updates should further information that may impact the health and safety of building occupants become available.

As you know, MAG's policies, including physical distancing, hand hygiene, PPE and source control face coverings, are in place to reduce the possibility of virus transmission in the workplace. I urge you to continue to be proactive at all times in following the precautions in place in the building. Given the rise in concern surrounding the Delta Variant of Concern (VOC), it is imperative to remember that when followed, the suite of overlapping preventative measures within our workplaces continues to be robust and effective at mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission and associated VOCs.

Vaccinations play a vital role in mitigating the transmission of COVID-19. Vaccines are safe, effective, and the best way to protect you and those around you from COVID-19 and its variants. A mandatory vaccination policy is currently under development requiring all Ontario Public Servants to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or to undergo regular testing. This will serve as an additional measure to ensure that your health, safety and wellbeing continues to be protected in our workplaces.

[Learn about our COVID-19 vaccination program](#)

I understand that this situation may cause you concern. Your health and safety is of the highest priority for us. We are in ongoing discussions with Public Health and will continue to follow their guidance around best practices to ensure your safety.

As a reminder, coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses. These include:

- stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others,
- wear face coverings or PPE, as indicated,
- wash your hands often with soap and water,
- use hand sanitizer as needed,

- sneeze and cough into your sleeve,
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth,
- avoid contact with people who are sick, and
- stay home if you are sick.

If you are in an at-risk group as identified by the Ministry of Health<sup>1</sup>, it is recommended that you talk with a doctor about your situation, reduce your time outside your home, wear a source control face covering or surgical/procedure mask, and keep a distance from others as much as possible and to discuss any concerns with your manager.

If you have other questions or concerns, please speak with your manager. You can also find more general information on Ontario's COVID-19 website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov#section-6>

Thank you for your understanding.

Jennifer Wilder,  
Manager of Court Operations

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health considers people in the following groups as “at risk” because there is a risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19:

- people older than 70
- people with an existing health condition
- people with a compromised immune system