

# DIRECTIVE

**Directive No.:**  
2020-01

**Date Issued:**  
May 21, 2020

**Updated:**  
June 04, 2020

**Authority:** | This Directive is issued under the authority of the General Manager of SSHA.

**Subject:** | COVID-19 Response: Update to Toronto Shelter Standards Section 9.3.1 'Sleeping Areas and Beds Standards' and the 24-Hour Respite Site Standards Section 7.3.1 'Resting Areas and Spaces'

**Directive or Required Action:** | Interim changes to standards in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated based on available direction and guidance from Ontario Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health. Effective immediately, the following sections in the Toronto Shelter Standards and the 24-Hour Respite Site Standards are replaced by the versions contained in this directive.

## **Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS) Section 9.31 (e)**

e. Shelter providers will maintain a lateral separation of at least 2.0 m. edge to edge between beds (or alternative sleeping arrangements) and a vertical separation of at least 1.1 m. between the top of a bed frame to the lowest hanging section of an overhead object (e.g., light fixture, bulkhead, air duct, plumbing, etc.).

- (i) Family shelter providers are exempt from meeting the lateral separation requirements of 9.3.1 Sleeping Areas and Beds in rooms where only one family unit/household has been assigned.
- (ii) Single adult, mixed adult and youth shelter providers will not use top bunks for clients to sleep in.

## **24-Hour Respite Site Standards (TRS) Section 7.3.1 (i)**

- (i) Providers will maintain a lateral separation of at least 2.0 m. edge to edge between resting spaces.
  - (i) Lateral separation exceptions may be made for couples that request it.

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The personal space standards Section 9.31(c) of the Toronto Shelter Standards and Section 7.3.1(h) of the 24-Hour Respite Site Standards are no longer applicable while this directive is in effect.

Shelter and Respite Site providers are required to maintain physical distancing strategies to meet current public health guidance for shelter settings during the pandemic. Additional recommendations for physical distancing in homeless service settings include:

- Remind everyone at your setting to maintain a 2.0 m. distance from others as much as possible.
- Use furniture layout to promote physical distancing (e.g. removing chairs around tables to promote 2.0 m. distance between others for seating).
- When possible, stagger eating times and set-up tables so clients are not directly facing each other.
- When possible, create a staggered bathing schedule to reduce the amount of people using the facilities at the same time.
- Create a schedule for using common spaces.
- Use visual markers to help promote physical distancing in high-traffic locations throughout the setting (e.g. at intake, meal lines, offices).
- Ensure physical distancing in any elevators used at the setting.
- Cancel group activities that exceed five people; try to provide support through telephone or on-line activities where possible.
- For specialist services that may be required in the setting (e.g. mental health services, harm reduction, or substance use supports) for psychosocial support to clients, inform service providers to maintain physical distance.

The standards detailed in this Directive remain in effect until further notice.

A new shelter capacity for each program will be established through the application of the updated standards. Appropriate adjustments are to be made in SMIS once capacity is confirmed with SSHA. Providers are expected to admit clients and stay at capacity if the site is not experiencing an outbreak.

SSHA will continue to work with Shelter and Respite Site Providers that do not currently meet the standards to identify appropriate solutions that ensure the

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safety of clients and implementation of appropriate public health measures for infection prevention.

Shelter and Respite Site providers are directed to review the Updated Sections with your staff, senior management and board of directors and to implement all requirements.

**Purpose of Directive:**

To ensure health and safety in shelter and respite sites during the COVID-19 Pandemic by ensuring appropriate physical distancing occurs wherever clients sleep.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) a pandemic. COVID-19 is a new type of coronavirus that can cause acute respiratory illness and can spread person-to-person through large respiratory droplets that enter the human body through mouth, nose and, possibly, eyes.

**Background:**

SSHA, in collaboration with Toronto Public Health and community partners, implemented a three tier strategy focused on Prevention, Mitigation, and Recovery to reduce the spread of infection in homeless service settings. In Tier One: Prevention, the shelter system and respite sites decreased capacity to increase physical distancing in adherence to Ontario Ministry of Health guidance.

**Resources:**

- [COVID-19 Resources for Homelessness Services](#)

**Contact Information:**

For more information about and support in implementation of this Directive, please contact your ARO.