

# TORONTO SHELTER BULLETIN

**Bulletin No.:** 2024-04

**Date Issued:** December 12, 2024

<b>Bulletin Type:</b>	<b>General Update</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>IPAC Measures for Homelessness Service Providers</b>  Please post this bulletin in a highly visible area accessible to all relevant staff.
<b>Bulletin:</b>	<p>Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) is a set of year-round practices in homeless congregate settings and an important component of reducing the risk of the transmission of infectious illnesses, including COVID-19. Fall and winter are high risk transmission periods where the need to intensify IPAC practices is more acute. IPAC practices include, but are not limited to, the use of medical masks, personal protective equipment (PPE), screening, outbreak management plans, and compliance monitoring.</p> <p>All shelter, 24-hour respite and 24-hour women's drop-in providers, including those operating warming centres ("Providers"), are recommended to implement these IPAC measures to reduce the risk or burden of transmission of infectious disease and protect clients and staff.</p> <p><b>Providers are recommended</b> to support staff, clients, and visitors to implement the following IPAC measures:</p> <p><i>General</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providers will ensure that general IPAC practice signage are posted in highly visible areas as appropriate (e.g. hand washing and food safety guidelines, personal hygiene practices, etc.).</li><li>• Providers will refer to Outbreak Management Plans for enhanced IPAC practices, including using personal protective equipment during an outbreak or when providing services to a client who is a suspected or confirmed infectious illness (e.g. COVID-19, Mpox, influenza). Outbreak Management Plans should be site-specific and updated based on changes to programming and physical requirements.</li></ul> <p><i>Personal Protective Equipment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providers should post signage in common areas, noting that masking is encouraged and providing guidance for the appropriate donning and doffing of masks. PPE is used alone or in combination to prevent exposure, by placing a barrier between the infectious source and one's own mucous</li></ul>

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membranes, airways, skin and clothing. The selection of PPE is based on the nature of the interaction with the client/environment and/or the likely modes of transmission of infectious agents. Selection of the appropriate PPE is based on a point of care risk assessment, which dictates what is worn to break the chain of transmission.

- Providers will provide personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, respirators, goggles, disposable gloves, gowns, etc.) and supplies to staff and clients as directed by Toronto Public Health and/or Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS).

## *Screening of clients, staff and visitors*

- All new clients and clients transferred from other sites should be actively screened using the Acute Infectious Illness Client Screening Tool for Homelessness Service Settings upon admission or intake.
- Existing clients should passively self-screen using signage (e.g., at points of entry).
- Staff will conduct daily monitoring by check-ins as needed and/or when a client is presenting symptoms of an infectious illness (e.g., new onset cough, fever, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea or infectious rash) to identify and monitor new or worsening symptoms.
- All staff and visitors should passively screen using signage. Staff and visitors with signs or symptoms of infectious respiratory illness should be discouraged from entering the facility.

Providers are expected to facilitate scheduling any activities undertaken by TSSS or its contracted IPAC specialists that support the monitoring and implementation of IPAC practices.

**Resources:** [Funding Submissions, Directives & Bulletins – City of Toronto](#)

City of Toronto, [Toronto Shelter Standards](#)

City of Toronto, [24-Hour Respite Site Standards \(toronto.ca\)](#)

City of Toronto, [Infection Prevention & Control Resources for Homelessness Service Settings](#)

Public Health Ontario, [Action IPAC Activities to Support Infection Prevention and Control Practices in Congregate Living Settings](#)

Public Health Ontario, [IPAC Self-Assessment for Congregate Living Settings](#)

Public Health Ontario, [How to: Put On and Take Off Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)

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**Contact  
Information:**

Public Health Ontario, <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>

For more information about this Bulletin or IPAC practices, please contact your site's designated IPAC Lead.

For general questions, including about the Toronto Shelter Standards, please contact your Agency Review Officer (ARO) or Manager.