



Occupational  
Hygiene Association  
of Ontario

December 22, 2021

Colleen Geiger  
President & CEO (Acting)  
Public Health Ontario  
480 University Ave, Suite 300, Toronto, ON

By Email: [colleen.geiger@oahpp.ca](mailto:colleen.geiger@oahpp.ca)

Dear Ms. Geiger,

OHAO is writing to you again as the association for professionals in this province that work to prevent occupational diseases across all sectors of the economy. Our members are well educated in the evaluation and control of hazards, and work to develop controls that reduce risks, including biological exposures.

The mission of OHAO is:

- sponsoring professional development and training;
- promoting public and legal recognition of occupational hygiene;
- *developing partnerships with stakeholders-employers, unions, government;*
- *providing public education; and*
- *fostering communication and networking amongst members*

The risk of transmission in shared air has been communicated by the Ontario Science Table (December 16, 2021) and the PHO has issued a guidance document (December 15, 2021: *“Interim IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19”*).

The Science Table has reinforced the importance of key behaviours and public health measures, including *“well fitted high quality mask”* and *“increase ventilation in all indoor spaces.”*

PHO is including foundational occupational hygiene principles in its latest guidance by recommending N95s for general COVID-19 patient care.

We have concerns with the statements and messaging suggesting that N95 respirators do not provide significant protective effect over medical masks.

It has been long established that N95s respirators are tight fitting and reduce wearer’s exposure to airborne particles, including small particle aerosols and large droplets, whereas medical masks are loose fitting and contain the wearer’s respiratory particle emissions.



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Occupational hygiene professionals play an instrumental role in supporting, among other measures, appropriate ventilation assessment and implementation, guiding the selection of risk based PPE use, as well as providing guidance on respirator fit testing and its performance. In keeping with a previous letter sent by OHAO (dated May 28, 2021), please engage the occupational hygiene community.

We strongly believe that through a collaborative approach with key stakeholders in workplace health and safety, which includes occupational hygiene professionals, is needed in order to best prevent or mitigate the risk of exposure of infectious diseases in the workplace.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions about our professional association or our membership.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne-Marie Landis-Groom MHS, CIH, ROH  
OHAO President, on behalf of OHAO Board of Directors